PUBLISHED ON GOLDEN JUBILEE
YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST ACADEMY

Guiding Lights by Senior Swamis



A Divine Life Society Publication

Published on the auspicious occasion of

GOLDEN JUBILEE

of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy

GUIDING LIGHTS

by

SENIOR SWAMIS

Published by :

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P. O. Shivanand Nagar-249192

Distt. Tehri Garhwal, U.P. Himalayas-INDIA

FIRST EDITION : 1998
(1000 Copies)

Released on the auspicious occasion of Golden Jubilee of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy (A Department of the Divine Life Society)-3rd July, 1998

For **FREE DISTRIBUTION**

Published by Swami Krishnananda for
The Divine Life Society, P. O. Shivanandanagar
Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, U. P., Himalayas, India

Printed at Kamal Printers,
365, Raja Park, Jaipur-302004,
Rajasthan, India.

Publisher's Note

The present collection of articles by the Three Mighty Guiding Lights of the Divine Life movement fulfils a long felt need of aspirants and laity alike. Published on the auspicious occasion of Golden Jubilee of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, the publication becomes a memorable event.

The Variety of the subjects dealt with, it is hoped, will not fail to cater to the varied demands of the readers. Coming as they do from the pen of erudite scholarly saints who are 'established in the Absolute', these articles present a sweep of study and experience perhaps not heard of very often. The learned Swamijis have the sparkling simplicity, practical approach and deep insight into all aspects of Yoga sadhana. To all the three, our humble reverential prostrations.

It is hoped that all the readers in general and the students of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy in particular will profit immensely by this publication.

— The Divine Life Society.

CONTENTS

Teachings Of The Vedanta

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

The Vedanta holds the first place amongst all systems of philosophy. It is a system of philosophy in which human speculation has reached its very pinnacle or acme. It is indeed a unique system of thought, which demands a subtle, sharp intellect to grasp its fundamental principles. It is unique in the boldness of its conclusions. It is absolutely free from all shades of dogmatism or pet doctrines.

Vedanta means 'no slavery'. It gives freedom to all. It has no quarrel with any religion whatsoever. It preaches universal principles. It is the religion of the Upanishads. It inculcates the idea of that universal religion which is the fountain-head of all the religions of the world. It is a great leveller. It unites all. It gives room to all.

The Vedanta is that sublime philosophy which teaches that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Soul and removes the illusion of the Jiva. The Vedanta is the science of the Atman, that helps the aspirants to eradicate fear, sorrow , grief and delusion, and to realize the Self . It is that magnanimous philosophy which raises the ignorant Jiva to the sublime heights of Brahmanhood. It is a panacea for all human ailments . It is a sovereign specific for the disease of birth and death. Mere theorizing of the Vedantic principles will not do. You should become a practical Vedantin. You should realize the Atman which the Vedanta treats of.

The Vedanta wants you to give up attachment for body, wife, children and property. It wants you to abandon all worldly desires, cravings and longings for worldly objects. The Vedanta wants you to eradicate the desire for power, name and fame. It wants you to break all ties and connections with the world, mentally. It wants you to cut off ruthlessly all worldly attachments by the sword of discrimination.

Some ignorant people only say that the Vedanta preaches immorality, hatred and pessimism. This is a very sad mistake. It

does not preach either immorality or even indifference to morality. The realisation of Brahman is not possible for the immoral. Only an aspirant who has ethical perfection and who is endowed with the four means can become a student of the Vedanta. How can you expect an aspirant who possesses discrimination, dispassion, serenity, self-restraint, forbearance, endurance, faith, one-pointed mind and burning desire for liberation, to lead an immoral life? It is quite absurd. The Vedanta wants you to destroy Moha or selfish love and passion for the body and to develop pure, disinterested cosmic love or the magnanimous divine love. It never preaches pessimism but it preaches the pinnacle of optimism. It preaches, "Give up this little illusory pleasure. You will get eternal and infinite Bliss. Kill this little 'I'. You will become one with the infinite. You will become immortal. Give up this illusory world . You will get the vast domain of supreme peace or the Kingdom of God. "Is this pessimism? Certainly not . It is wonderful optimism.

You now identify yourself with the mortal, physical body. You have strong Deha-Adhyasa. You have no idea of the Atman now. You have no unshakable conviction of its existence also. You are only body now. You are Mr. so and so. Your mind is filled with impure thoughts and egoism. You are afraid of death. You should realise the immortal self through direct cognition. Then only you can know that the Atman is immortal.

Everybody wishes to be independent. Everybody wants to be supreme ruler. No one likes to be guided by the wishes of others. Everyone wishes others to be guided by and follow his wishes. Everybody in his heart of hearts really desires to rule over all others, if only he could . Everybody wishes to have no rival to himself. The real cause is that there is in you the immortal self. Effulgent Soul or Atman which is the support for the whole universe. In reality you are this Atman. That is the reason why you have such a feeling and desire. Suzerainty is quite natural to you. Suzerainty is an attribute of the Atman. On account of ignorance, you have mistaken the body for the Atman and you try to have no rivals in the body, in the

business, in office, in college , in games, in dominions and in any field of activity. You can have absolute suzerainty only by realising the Atman. Atma-Svarajya only can make you absolutely independent. Atma-Svarajya only can make you the Supreme Ruler or Absolute monarch of the whole universe. Therefore realise this wonderful Atman and become a veritable mighty potentate of the three worlds.

O man , in essence thou art the blessed Divinity. Thou art the immortal blissful Self. Why are you attracted towards the physical beauty , the beauty of landscape and flowers when you are yourself the Beauty of beauties, the Fountain-source of all beauties? When you are yourself the Eternity, why are you limited by time? Why do you say: 'I am forty years of age?' Why are you afraid of death? Why do you say, 'Time has passed away' when you are the infinite? Why do you say: 'I am fatty. I am 5 feet 6 inches?' When you are yourself the Sun of suns, the Light of lights, why do you admire the sun, the moon the stars and the lightnings? When you are the Emperor of emperors, the source of all wealth, why do you say: 'I have no money. I am very poor. I am penniless?' Why do you beg? When you are the Director and the Governor of the whole world, why do you say: 'I am helpless. I am your most obedient servant?' When you are an embodiment of bliss and peace, why do you say: ' I am miserable , I am restless?' Realise this mysterious Sat-Chid-Ananda Atman through purification , concentration, meditation and identification . Rejoice in this wonderful Self and be free. Tat Tvam Asi, thou art That, O dear Satyakama bold!

Know and feel always that you are the all-pervading, immortal Consciousness, the undying , eternal Atman. This alone can give you real freedom and everlasting bliss. Spread this message to your friends and to those who come in contact with you. You can build a new order. You can give peace and solace to millions.

In the lamp of your heart, put the oil of Vairagya. Insert the wick of devotion. Now kindle the light of knowledge by constant

meditation and see. Now the darkness of ignorance will be dispelled. You will have stupendous vision of Truth. You will be illumined.

In the day-time what gives you light? Sun . At night when there is no sun, what gives you light? Moon, stars and lamps. When there are no sun, moon, stars, what gives you light? Eyes. What gives you light when the eyes are closed ? Buddhi or intellect. Who finds out the defect in the intellect, whether there is clarity or turbidity? Aham(I) . That Aham is the Light of lights, the Eternal Soul or Atman or the Infinite.

To behold forms is the Dharma of the eyes. Behind the names and forms , there is the universal life or hidden Brahman or immanent God. Try to feel the reality underneath the forms. The support or substratum for all forms is Brahman. When you look at an object behold Brahman which is the one essence and abandon the form as it is illusory or unreal. Have the same attitude towards other objects which pertain to the other senses . This is the meaning of the Sloka: '*Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja*—Abandon all duties and come to Me alone for shelter'(Gita, Chap. XVIII-66)

Viveka (discrimination) is the seed. Vairagya (dispassion) is the root. Guru's grace is the shower. Brahma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the fruit. This is the path of Jnana Yoga.

Learn to discriminate between the permanent and the impermanent. Behold the Self in all beings, in all objects. You can imagine that there is nothing but protoplasm in this universe. Then all the forms will vanish. All the forms are constructed out of one kind of matter only. A tree or a man or a dog or a bug or a mosquito is made up of the same kind of matter or protoplasm. A protoplasm is mould of matter in which life is placed. It is a homogeneous, structureless substance, forming the physical basis of life, endowed with contractibility with a chemical composition allied to that of albumen. The thread of matter that connects all forms is one and the same. You can also imagine that there is nothing but energy or

mind in this universe. The student in the path of Jnana Yoga thinks that there is only one thread of pure consciousness. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna : 'All this is threaded on Me, as rows of pearls on a string' (Gita VII-7). The same life that throbs or pulsate in you is throbbing in ants, dogs, elephants and all creatures. Realise your identity and intimate relationship with all creatures. Look at tree or a shrub, a dog or a cat and endeavor to behold behind the veil of form the real hidden life or consciousness behind and underneath the form. If you practice like this for sometime, you will derive inexpressible joy. All hatred will cease. You will develop cosmic love and unity of consciousness. This will be the rare magnanimous experience. This will eventually result in the Vedatic realisation of oneness.

Share what you have, physical, mental, moral or spiritual with all. Serve the Self in all. Feel when you serve others that you are serving your own self. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Melt all illusory differences. Remove all barriers that separate man from man. Fix the mind on the Self when you work. This is the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads and sages of yore. This is practical Vedanta. This is real, eternal life in the Atman. Put these things in practice in the daily battle of life. You will shine as a dynamic Yogi or a Jivanmukta.



Sadhana and The Divine Life Society

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of the Divine, *Jijnasus* and *mumukshus!* A jijnasu is one who is in quest of knowledge, jnana. A mumukshu is one who is desirous of liberation or moksha. It is with a quest, a desire for knowledge, a seeking for knowledge–knowledge of the purpose of life, how to live it effectively, what is *dharma*, what is *adhyatma* (spirituality)- that you have come here. Through *sravana* (listening), through *satsanga,* you wish to imbibe knowledge that may help you to live your life in a more effective manner. Therefore you are a *Jijansu.*

You want this knowledge because you have been told and you have believed that such knowledge may help you to attain libertaion from pain, sorrow, suffering, fear, anxiety–all the unpleasant, negative experiences a person is subjected to in this earth plane. During this life span, one is subjected to sorrow as well as joy, pain as well as pleasure, misery as well as happiness. And whereas the latter is desirable–joy, pleasure, happiness- everyone wants it, strives for it, no one wants the former, namely sorrow, pain, misery. So the human quest is for liberation from these undesirable, painful experiences, which make one suffer. Simultaneously, the human quest is also for the attainment of all the positive, pleasurable experiences, *sukha, ananda, santi, tripti, santosha,* comfort, convenience, joy, happiness, pleasure. And due to the belief that knowledge gained here may help you in fulfilling this central quest–liberation from all that is painful and undesirable you have come here for instruction, guidance, inspiration, study and reflection that will be helpful to you. Therefore, you are *mumukshus.* You are sadhakas actively engaged in spiritual *sadhana.*

As such, you want to know how to improve your *sadhana,* better your concentration, overcome *vikshepa (*tossing) of the mind. now, with the intention of meeting the needs of *sadhakas, jijnasus, mumukshus, satsangis* such as you, Gurudev long ago decided to

provide a handy manual giving all the necessary information about spiritual life, Yoga and sadhana, so that one who is keenly desirous of a life of *sadhana* may find all the material, all the ingredients necessary, to immediately launch into this life of *sadhana*, to immediately commence leading a practical spiritual life of daily spiritual practices.

To this end, he did not want to leave anything untouched. He wanted to include everything. And this compact volume gives, therefore, the essence of all the Yoga paths–*hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, japa yoga, laya yoga* etc. And it gives invaluable practical instructions and hints on how to successfully carry on such *sadhana*–how to plan it, how to arrange the time of your day from morning till night, what time to allot for what *sadhana,* how to carefully plan it in a systematic manner, and then how to keep watch upon it so that at a glance you will be in a position to know how well you are proceeding. You will then be in a positon to key yourself up periodically, to take specific resolves or resolutions, so as to keep the intensity of the *sadhana* at a desired pitch, so that it does not slacken.

Thus, beloved Gurudev provided for us in this compact manual everything that is necessary, helpful and useful to a *sadhaka.* And it is this manual that is given to every member of the Divine Life Society upon enrolling as a member, as part of the package that each new member receives. This package has the signifacant name "Sadhana Set," and the name of the manual is *Essence of Yoga.*

The very purpose of membership in the Divine Life Society is to commence an active, practical and progressive spiritual life. It is to know everything about spiritual *Sadhana,* to know everything about the very essence of all the different types of Yoga. Therefore, if you want to know about *sadhana,* obtain a copy of this book and study if diligently. You will understand yourself, understand the mind, understand the finer points of spiritual life and the secret of *Yoga Sadhana.* It is given in a very concise way–not in an elaborate

way but concise, compact, brief–yet not leaving any essential point out. Thus equip yourself in the knowledge of right *sadhana* and proceed upon the path !

Sadhana is directing all your activities towards the ultimate experience of the great Reality, sad-darshana.

The ultimate objective of *sadhana* is *sad-darshana* for which we always pray *asato ma sad gamaya*. We know that here we have to live amidst passing unrealities, and that passing unrealities are the only thing that we know. Since birth we have lived only amidst passing unrealities, this changing phenomenal appearance. That is our only knowledge, our only experience. But we have been told that there is something higher than this, something that does not pass, which is *nitya,* permanent. Because it is *nitya*, it is *satya*. Therefore, we want *darsan* of the *sat*. The ancient prayer, therefore, is : Lead us from unrealities to the great Eternal Reality, the Cosmic Reality.

It is very difficult to belive that what we perceive, what we live right in the middle of, what we experience day after day is not the reality ; whereas, that which you have never perceived, about which you have no knowledge, that which you have never experienced–neither the nose has smelt it, nor the eye has seen it, nor the hands have touched it, nor the ear has heard it, nor the tongue has tasted it–is the reality.

Therefore, faith, *sraddha*, is required in the *apta vakya* (words of a trustworthy person), in the *sruti vakya* (words of the Vedas), in the *guru vakya* (words of the Guru). For the *srutis*, the saints, sages, mystics and world teachers and your own Guru have no axe to grind ; they have no ulterior motives, nothing to gain by misleading you, telling you something which is not true. They have no self-interest ; they stand to gain nothing. Therefore you must believe.

The *srutis* proclaim that which is beneficial to you, conducive

to your highest welfare. They proclaim it without any motivation, without any purpose except to benefit you. Therefore, believe in the *apta vakya*, believe in the *sruti vakya*, believe in the *guru vakya*, For, if at all in this entire universe of man, there is anything that is totally unselfish, it is *sruti*, it is great immortal teachers who have attained everything that has to be attained, who have fulfilld all their duties, done everything that has to be done. Their hearts are full; they have no more desires. Such ones cannot misguide you. Therefore, believe, have faith, *sraddha*.

You should not think that a logical and rational approach in anyway excludes faith, that they are incompatible- "Faith is blind, whereas we want to know. we want everything to be proved before we believe, because we are rational people." Long ago our ancient discovered a super-rational approach to the great Reality. They were people of keen intellect, incisive, sharp, probing, analytical. They were a hundred times more logical, rational and scientific minded than any of us. And yet it was these *jnanis,* practising the *vichara marga, jnanayoga, vedanta,* who said : "*sraddhavan labhate jnanam* (The man who is full of faith obtains knowledge)." They also declared that if you wish to listen to the exposition of Vedantic truths, one of the virtues you must equip yourself with is *sraddha*, faith, belief.

Go through the *Essence of Yoga* devoutly. The great heart of Swami Sivanandaji had only desire, one objective, that is, your own highest welfare, your own highest good. It was you he was thinking about when he produced all this great literature. He was not thinking of himself. He was thinking firstly of you, secondly of you and thirdly, also, only of you. He wanted to benefit you; he was thinking of your success in life. He was thinking of your highest good and welfare, of your happiness. Therefore, with faith and devotion, sincerely make an attempt to earnestly study the wisdom teachings of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. That is the greatest investment. You could not do a wiser thing than this.

But, you must have earnestness and sincerity; you must not have superficiality and frivolity; you must not have only curiosity in Yoga and spiritual life. There should be deep earnestness to imbibe the knowledge and to start living the life, to plunge into practice. This is the great thing needful.

Sadhana was the keynote of all of worshipful Gurudev's teachings. *Sadhana* is the central theme of all his writings. *Sadhana* was the thing that he wanted you to actively live in your daily life; he wanted you to give it a central place.

How to do *Sadhana ?* In what manner to set about doing it ? What are all the helpful practices to further it ? To imprat this knowledge to you, he carefully wrote "Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions," which has been translated into all the Indian lanugages and has spread everywhere throughout the world. He also compiled and produced "Sadhana Tattva," the science of Seven Cultures, which contains a carefully graded series of thirty-two instructions covering Health Culture, Energy Culture, Ethical Culture, Will Culture, Heart Culture, Psychic Culture and Spiritual Culture. He compiled "Twenty Hints on Meditation," the Resolve Form, Daily Routine Timetable and the spiritual Diary. He put the essence of all of them into the Universal Prayer. And almost everything that I have just now mentioned, you will find in the *Essence of Yoga,* which you cannot purchase because it is not for sale. It is given only to genuine *sadhakas* who want to commence serious spiritual practice in their daily life.

Therefore, if you wish to know how to lead a life of spiritual *sadhana,* you could do no better than to obtain this book by becoming a member of the Divine Life Society. Then commence living a practical spiritual life in a systematic way, in a scientific way. That is why Gurudev came and lived. That is why he left behind him a Sivananda Ashram. That is why he left behind him a Divine Life Society–in order that you may do spiritual *sadhana,* you may move towards God. You must seek the Immortal and become blessed.

Therefore, what is a member of the Divine Life Society? A member is a *sadhaka* engaged in spiritual practices with an earnest desire, earnest aspiration, to improve one's life, to spiritualise one's activities, to live in a Yogic way, so that one's entire life becomes a process of gradually ascending towards the supreme Goal.

Ponder well this aspect of your personality, and see whether you are well established in this great aspiration, this great ideal of being a *sadhaka*. Ponder well and see whether you have acquired all the qualifications of a *sadhaka*, whether day by day you are imporving these qualifications and becoming a true *mumukshu*, a true *jijnasu*, becoming one established in *yama* and *niyama*, one established in *viveka*, in *vairagya*, in the *shat-sampada*, in *mumukshutva*, becoming one well established in all these important aspects of the preparatory *sadhanas*. Constantly keep analysing your life. Be so much absorbed in it that you have no time for miscellaneous thinking and activities. This is because you are earnest, you are sincere, you are focused upon your most important vocation, your spiritual *sadhana*.

It is such an attitude of earnestness, sincerity, seriousness, that pay dividends. Ultimately it will take you to supreme blessedness, crown your life with the glorious attainment of peace, bliss, fearlessness and freedom. That is the purpose, that is the objective of *sadhana*. Therefore, be a sincere, practical *sadhaka*. Improve day by day. Move towards perfection.

May Gurudev's choicest blessing be with you in this great adventure! May the divine grace of God grant you steady, unhampered progress and grant you fulfilment, all success, in your *sadhana*!



A Friend, Philosopher and Guide

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

Spirit, which is veritably the power of God set in motion, keeps itself ever vigilant to maintain the purpose of creation, and it never sleeps even for a moment. It is always active in working to maintain the equilibrium and order necessary for the fulfilment of the Aim of creation. It is always intolerant about excesses and extremes of any kind. Whenever and wherever there is an intolerable excess or extreme, an over-stepping of boundaries and limits, the Spirit begins to work forcefully and brings back the power to move in the direction of the desirable, and sets things in tune with the purposes or aims which it has in view.

At the time when Sri Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj came to limelight in this world, sometime in the earlier part of this century, it could be observed that there were certain movements in human history which required rectification. History is nothing but the march of the intentions of the Time-Spirit which vigorously adjusts and adapts itself to the ultimate aim and goal towards which the entire universe is moving. At the beginning of this century, there were two trends in social movement, which went to excesses, and they had to be checked. There was, on the one side, an excess of traditional orthodoxy, while, on the other side, there was an extreme in the materialistic and economic outlook of life. We had both these things visible not only in India but all over the world. There were two sections of mankind thinking in two departments of life altogether, one going to the one extreme and the other to the other extreme. The religious orthodoxy tended to isolate itself from the realities of life and set up an almost impossible set of ideals of religiosity, a type of religion which made it almost an other-worldly affair, perhaps having nothing to do with the present life, as also bordering upon social disparities and stratifications of human society in a manner which could not have been regarded as healthy from the point of view of the aims of the Time-Spirit. On the other hand, there was the other side, viz., science, physics, technical

developments and industrial revolution, all of which gripped the minds of the modern Indian youth, who gradually lost contact with the vital springs of Indian culture and began to feel enamoured of the demonstrations of modern achievements in the fields of applied science and technology. So, there was a section of people, youngsters included, which moved in the direction of the exterior world of sense-contacts, social amusement and physical comfort, making it the be-all and end-all of life, as it were, ignoring the spiritual value of life altogether, on account of the glamour of the western civilisation which had its impact upon Indian culture due to the peculiar circumstances of history in which India found itself in the beginning of this century. As mentioned, there was religious orthodoxy, even untouchability of various types, which was definitely not in consonance with the aims of the Time-Spirit or the Will of God. The balance of life was swinging between the devil and the deep sea.

And whenever such a gulf of difference arises in the lives of the people, whenever there is any intolerable movement of any kind, the spirit of Time takes the rod in its hand; and it does its work in two ways. sometimes it is harsh with people and punishes them with a tremendous revolution, an earthquake, cataclysm or massacre,– it can do even that when it is angry. But, if its intentions are of a different kind, it can bring about an inward revolution of a cultural and spiritual nature (leading to the same aim, of course) and it is this act of the Time-Spirit that was responsible, we may say, for the birth of such great spiritual masters like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. In a sense, we may say that the activities of the Time-Spirit began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself, which marks the beginning of the revival of ancient Indian culture in the modern period. This kind of activity of invisible forces concretised itself in various ways of manifestation, and these manifestations were of various types, some visible and some invisible. The visible came in the form of stalwarts, geniuses and masters–stalwarts, like Tilak and Gokhale, geniuses like Swami

Dayananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Aurobindo, and masters like Ramana Maharshi and Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. These great personages of modern times were the spirits of an inward revolution which was nothing but the hands of the Time-Spirit working for a cosmic purpose. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was an embodiment of the intentions of the Cosmic spirit. It may safely be stated that he was Vedanta in daily life, and Yoga in daily life, philosophy in action, sage and saint combined, the highest idealism shaking hands with a down-to-earth realism. That was the peculiar touch which Swami Sivananda gave to the spiritual value of mankind.

Spirituality was then confined to monasteries, Mahatmas and Yogis in sylvan areas and sequestered places. It had not become a part and parcel of day-to-day life. That was one aspect of the excesses. As mentioned earlier, there was the other side of it, a complete oblivion in respect of spiritual values; a thorough westernisation taking in only the comfort-and-satisfaction aspect of the western civilisation and ignoring the logical, ethical and other valuable principles involved in that civilisation. This dichotomy or gulf between the two excesses had to be bridged by a personality who could act as a liaison between these two aspects of human nature and activity. So, persons like Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Sri Aurobindo acted this role of bringing together the principles of ancient tradition and wisdom in consonance with the present-day requirements of modern logic and scientific approach. So there was once again the success of the Time-Spirit in its real form, not cutting itself off from the world, unapproachable and inaccessible to people, nor going to the other excess of downright crass materialism.

Sri Gurudev's approach was therefore very comprehensive and his life was his teaching. Some, at least, of his disciples regard themselves as thrice blessed for having had the rare privilege of living in the physical vicinity of this great Master; living with him for years and observing him was a greater lesson imbibed by his disciples and followers than a study of books. This is a fact, and it is a great truth. A view of the disciples who had the opportunity and

good fortune to be with him for many years of their lifetime had this wonderful experience of living under the shade of a father, mother and divinity manifest in human form, goodness and compassion blended in one. This is why the life of Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj cannot be fully written from all its aspects. There were so many characteristics of his life, and his close associates like Swami Atmanandaji Maharaj say that Gurudev had several of the characteristics of Lord Krishna Himself–the multifaceted manifestation of God–a personality inclusive of everything and anything valuable in life. Sri Gurudev possessed a goodness that reached the stature of the most magnificent divinity and spirituality, at the same time coming down to the level of the children in the primary school and the man in the street. He was like Lord Rama too in some respects. Sri Rama was said to be 'Purva-Bhashi'. Valmiki says, *"Purva Bhashi Tu Raghavah."* Many people assume a dignity and a sense of prestige of their own which they maintain, on account of which they will not speak first,–they want to be spoken first. But Sri Rama was not like that. He would be the first to ask, "How are you ?" "If you do not speak, I will speak!"–that was Sri Rama's attitude. Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was like that. He would be the first to do Namaskara to you. It is not easy to recount all the many things his life-long disciples personally observed in his thorough-going technique of self-effacement and obliteration of the ego. A Sannyasin, a Paramahamsa of the Sri Sankaracharya Order, inwardly nothing short of a Jivanmukta, but outwardly behaving like anyone and everyone–Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was a surprise to many of the orthodox sannyasins living in the same area. Many of them could not understand what his attitude meant. And they could not reconcile his behaviour with the traditions which Sannyasins had to follow. A Sannyasin cannot touch the feet of a Grihastha, for instance. A Sannyasin cannot prostrate himself before a householder. It was all forbidden and regarded as heresy. Swamiji was just the opposite of it. He brought down the spirit of spirituality from its confines of fanatic orthodoxy in which many of the traditional Sannyasins got caught up, and made it a part and parcel

of the Kitchen, and bathroom and the latrine, the street and the shop, so that the aroma of the spirit he expected to spread itself in day-to-day life, in the office and the factories, not making any distinction between the boss and the subordinate, the worker and the employer. All this was surprise and wonder indeed to people used to thinking in other ways. And Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj came to over-step all barriers which separated man from man, barriers which cut off man from God Himself. Thus was his great message to people demonstrated and manifested in his own life. God should not remain separated from man. God cannot be in Vaikuntha or heaven. He has to be with us, He has to be here and walk with us on the road when we stroll, and He must be the friend of us, now. He must be a 'Sakha' so that we are not to aspire for a remote God but to live in God,– here and now. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's coming was to completely revolutionise spiritual aspiration and practice, by making it an affair of the daily life of every human being. to conclude, he was Vedanta-in-daily life.



The Prominent Place of Karma Yoga in Spiritual Practice

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

There are two ways in which you can free yourself from the bonds of action. A Karma Yogi is either a Jnani or a Bhakta. Karma and Jnana, Karma and Bhakti, combined only, enable you to detach yourself from the bondage of action.

But you cannot do any action without expectation of fruits! The mind is so framed that you will have to discipline it. Even if you salute me, you expect that I will salute you in return. If you give a cup of water, you expect thanks in return. This is the nature of the worldly mind, of the Rajasic mind, of the Tamasic mind. You will have to again and again cultivate and improve the Sattva-Guna. When you have Sattva, when you have a pure mind, then only you will be able to free yourself from the bonds of action. Through Japa, service, meditation, thinking, Vichara, Pratyahara and Pranayama, you will increase Sattva; through Sattvic food, Sattvic thinking, study of the Gita, Upanishads and the Yoga-Vasishtha, you fill your mind with Sattva. And then divine light and divine grace will descend.

Karma Yoga is very necessary. You cannot at once jump to the Nirguna meditation. You will have to purify your heart through continuous selfless service, without expectation of fruits. It is a great field, remaining in the world; you can develop these virtues; you can serve others, your neighbours, with Sakshi Bhava, with Narayana Bhava, feeling that there is the Lord who dwells in the chambers of your heart : *"Jyotisham-api tajjyotih tamasah paramuchyate; Jnanam jneyam jnana-gamyam hridi sarvasya tishthitam."* That, the Light of all lights, said to be beyond darkness knowledge, the knowable and the goal of knowledge is seated in the hearts of all.

Na tatra suryo bhati na chandra-tarakam nema vidyuto

bhanti kutoyam-agnih; Tameva bhantam-anubhati sarvam tasya bhasa sarvam-idam vibhati." The sun does not shine there; the moon does not shine there neither the lightning nor the fire; He shines by Himself, self-luminous, radiant, self-effulgent; and through His effulgence, all objects shine in this world. The intellect borrows its light from the Atman. All the senses borrow their light from the Atman. He is the Mind of the minds, Prana of pranas, Soul of the souls. He is the Eye of the eyes; Ear of the ears. He gives light to the senses, to the five Jnana-Indriyas (organs of knowledge), to the five Karma-Indriyas (organs of action). He gives light to the intellect. Such is the glorious nature of the One Atman you are trying to attain, in order to get rid of the miseries.

But the mind always identifies itself with the body. The cause of miseries is taking this body. The cause of this body is Karma (action). The cause of Karma is Raga-Dvesha or the two currents of likes and dislikes. The world is really constituted not of these elements, rivers and trees, but by the two currents of Raga and Dvesha, the two currents of attraction and repulsion. That is the real world. He who has controlled and destroyed these likes and dislikes, these two Vrittis (modifications), he who has thus conquered the mind is a real hero. That man of renunciation, who has realised his own self is a real hero. You can become an I.C.S. in four or five years. Universities are producing every year M.As. and B.As. But Jivanmuktas are rarely produced in this world; because man does not want it. It is only a few who are endowed with discrimination, who try to attain it, through Lord's Grace, introspection, self-analysis. Very few practise self-analysis and introspection. There is no time for it. As soon as you get up, you put on your coat and go to the office and work for your daily bread alone. Very few begin to think: "Who am I? What is the world?" That man is really the richest man, that man is the King of kings, who determines : "I must achieve something in this world." But that discrimination is very difficult to attain.

How difficult it is to control the habit of coffee or tea! You

complain that you get head-ache without it. You are a slave of these little things. You are unable to control these evil habits. Then, how to proceed on the spiritual path, with blindfolded eyes, with nobody to inspire you, where you can see only through the Divine Grace and your own efforts, through your own austerities ? That man is a hero who is attempting daily, in spite of his work–man has to work–to spiritualise all the actions.

How to spiritualise all actions? You must have faith and conviction in that one Essence, One Lord, who is the Goal of Life. You have taken this body for attaining Self-realisation. You have to march forward, equipping yourself-with various divine qualities that will make you a hero, converting all your activities, spiritulising them, feeling "I am trying to see the Lord in everything." You will have to study, again and again, the tenth Chapter of the Gita. God is manifest, Gos is immament, God is transcendent. You will have to start from the manifestation alone. You will have to study again and again the tenth Chapter of the Gita, the Vibhuti Yoga, where Lord Krishna says : "I am Asvantha ; I am the sun, the moon ; I am Om, I am everything." He had no time on the battlefield to enumerate everything. He also said : "I am the gambling of the cheat." Wickedness is also God. Wickedness is only a negative quality, not eternal. Positive always overcomes the negative. Study daily the Vibhuti Yoga. Try to recognise the Lord in all these names and forms.

You should have strength through discrimination. He who treats all the objects of this world as straw–that man is the greatest hero. The world is in need of such Nachiketas. The Nachiketas spirit is wanted. Such a man can move the whole world. He is the support for us all; he is the guide; and he can give you solace. Nachiketas had no bank balance. He was a boy of five years. Lord Yama tempted him, promised him dominions and celestial cars, innumerable years of life; but he was a wise boy, though he was young. The world is in need of such boys, of Nachiketas-type. He shunned everything and said :"O Lord Yama! Keep these things to

yourself. Give me Immortality. They will only wear out our energies and the senses will become old. Keep the dance and cars for you; give me Immortality. Give me the knowledge of the Sreyo-Marga, not the Preyo-Marga–the Sreyo-Marga that leads to Immortality, Eternal Bliss, Eternal Sunshine. Show me that path." Yama found that the little boy was not an ordinary boy. Then he began to teach him the Immortality of the Soul, the nature of the Soul beyond cause and effect, beyond good and evil, beyond time, space and causation. He found Nachiketas as the proper student. who did not want the earthly objects.

Earthly objects you need; but with all that you should never miss a day in meditation, in study of the Gita, Upanishads, Viveka chudamani, full of spiritual gems. One Sloka will give you peace. We want people of Nachiketas-type, aspiring for something beyond time, space and causation. You should have a strong aspiration, meditation and renunciation, though remaining in the world, like Chudala, like Janaka.

"Srathavan labhate jnanam." A man of faith gets wisdom. You are intent on money. So too, you must be intent on God. You must control the senses through Trataka, through Pranayama, through discipline. Develop one-pointed devotion to God. Give up those objects for which the mind is hankering. Don't become a slave. You can take anything as a master. There is nothing to be renounced; renounce this attachment, renounce worldliness, cravings for everything ; be detached. Detach. Attach. But. D.I.N. (Do It Now). Don't postpone it. Death will come at any moment. Disease will come at any moment. You should be prepared. You should have balanced mind in all tests. Draw strength from Rama-Nama : 'Om Namo Narayanaya' (Ashtakshara)–Prahlada recited this Mantra; 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.' (Dvadasakstara)–Dhruva recited this Mantra which Narada gave him. You should have faith. Every Mantra has got infinite potency. It is Rama-Nama, Narayana-Nama that cooled the boiling oil for Prahlada. It is Krishna-Nama that made a snake into a garland, and turned poison into nectar for Mira.

You should have self-discipline. You should do selfless service. Man has a constricted heart. Very few people have a large heart of charitable disposition. Man loves only his brother or sister, and a few friends who will help him when he himself is sick, from whom he can borrow. You don't feel 'The whole world is my family; '*Vasudhai va kutumbakam*' You will have to crush this mean-mindedness, this pig-mindedness, through service, generosity, sattvic thinking, daily study of Yoga-Vasistha and try to put them into practice. Vedanta is not a philosophy; Raja Yoga is not a theory. It is a vital fundamental experience. Raja Yoga is an experience, just as the sweetness of the mango you eat. It is the experience of those who sit for meditation daily, those who get up at 4 O'clock in the morning (Brahmamuhurta). Brahmamuhurta is most favourable for meditation, because the mind is filled with sattva, and the whole atmosphere is charged with Sattva. You have just come down from the supreme Consciousness. That consciousness remains in the mind as " I enjoyed a good sleep." You were one with the Atman, through the veil of Avidya (ignorance). The mind has not taken the form of Raga-Dvesha currents of the world. Just at that time get up and saturate the mind with Sattva, by reciting some of the Slokas.



The Path of Devotion to God

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

The coming into the company of seckers, coming into the company of those who love the Lord, coming into the company of those who aspire for the attainment of Divine Consciousness, is in itself a tremendous experience. It is a process of vital renewal, a spiritually recharging and remaking process. In this process you once again revive your inner awareness of the changeless behind these changing names and forms. You once again restore your relationship with that which is the very life of your life, the origin and source of your being, your invisible support and the goal ultimate of your existence. In Satsanga you once again strive to re-establish in a vital way your inner spiritual link with the Divine. This is the purpose and the meaning of satsanga. It is the drawing near to that which is the Eternal, the Immortal, the Changeless, the ever-perfect, the whole, the complete, behind this fragmentary and chaotic flux of momentary appearances, the names and forms that are rising shadows, and re-establishing your spiritual link with the abiding Reality that is the Innermost Self of your being.

Herein lies the unique value of Satsanga for, it draws your consciousness away from passing unrealities into the basic Reality which is the substratum of that which is seen, that which is perceived and it is in this living contact, in this continued and unbroken connection, in this vital spiritual relationship that you have the assurance of true fulfilment in your life. Take away this inner contact, and your life will soon run into a dryness, it will become arid and essenceless. There will come upon it darkness, great dejection, a sense of frustration, a sense of void and emptiness. Meaning will be taken out of the life of that individual who loses contact with Reality as such, for that Reality is the very root of your being. It is the source of your very existence and, therefore, that contact is the vital factor that makes for meaning, significance, depth a sense of fullness and a sense of real acumen in life.

Take the example of a tree. High above the ground there are fruits, flowers and leaves that are vital, alive, full of practical purpose. Non-existent as far as one's gross perception goes, there lies a certain source of living energy. Hidden under the depths of the earth is this source of life and sustenance which gives it power of growth. No matter how far above the ground are these various parts of the tree, they have a hidden connection with that invisible source and that is the secret of their life. If you chop off a branch, lop off a little twig, pluck a bunch of flowers or leaves separating them from the tree, immediately, their leaves are mumbered in hours. They fade, wither, and are soon lifeless and dry.

Similarly with your life, there is a hidden source, a hidden reservoir of all that is positive. When your life blossoms forth with the bliss that is beyond all sorrow into the peace that transcends all turmoil and restlessness, into an illumined state of consciousness that is far above this little half knowledge, ignorance and error, that which is the source that gives you the dynamism to move towards this fulfilment of your life and it is variously called "Self", "Atman" etc., but call it what you will, it is something you cannot ignore, or you ignore it at the cost of your own happiness, peace, sense of fulfilment, success and, in short, of your own life.

A great saint, summing up this secret of the fact of life, said: " Remembrance of God is life. Forgetfulness of God is death." The moment one separates oneself by losing contact and an inner relationship with the Divine, stagnation begins to come into one's life and life begins to weigh heavily and becomes a burden and is no longer a song of joy, a thing of beauty, an unfolding and outer progress. It becomes a burden filled with all the pains and sorrows and sufferings which are caused by this little 'I'-consciousness, the confined 'I'-consciousness cut off from its source, the greater Universal 'I'-consciousness.

Develop a relationship, or become aware of your relationship (it is something that does not need to be developed in you but it

needs to be heeded, not to be forgotten or neglected) with the Divine, become aware that in your true nature you are ever linked with the Divine Source of your being, and progressively make it grow until God becomes the dominating stuff of your consciousness. That is the great need. That is worship, and that is the way to make this life truly whole, truly successful in attainment and to transcend the imperfections and defects of this fitful transitory earth life.

Engage yourself in listening to the glories of God, listening to the power of Divine Love and listening to the sublime purpose of life. You have to keep the company of the lovers of God. Come to Satsanga. Cultivate the company of those who are already filled with this devotion and also read scriptures which bring out to you the grandeur of living the greatness of Divine Love.

Read the lives of saints. They are thrilling, living examples, embodiments of love. Regularly practise singing the glories of God, hymns, prayers. spiritual songs. They may seem silly matters for those who have not the remotest idea of what this important thing of liking oneself with the Divine means. Some think it is all so much nonsense, but those who have understood that the very essence of life is this inner link with the Divine, without which life is meaningless, realise the importance of these processes. Develop the constant practice of uttering the Name of the Divine. Worship also has an important place in developing Bhakti. External, ceremonial worship, taking the symbol of the Deity, lighting a lamp before it, decorating it with flowers, offering them to it, bowing down before it. In various ways expressing your attitude towards the Deity in actual acts. By thus exercising and expressing your devotion in an external way, in an active way, devotion grows, and also through meditation. Ultimately, by bringing about inwardly a subtle alteration in your consciousness, all these practices bring you to the Supreme inner process, the vital inner process where gradually, before you are aware of it, you begin to feel yourself as an identity, not in relation to the world outside but in relation to the Divine. Gradually, your consciousness alters and soon you, who

had known yourself only as the father of so and so, or the wife of so-and-so, begin to feel in your consciousness an awareness of yourself only as "I am a child of God", "I am the son of God", or "I am the servant of God",- whatever is your desired relationship. The consciousness lets go of its content in the form of a relationship to the outside world and takes up the form of being something only in relation to the Deity.

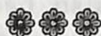
Then, your body exists here but you begin to live in the Divine. You begin to abide in God for you know yourself only as something of God and then the world begins to lose its power over you, it begins to lose its glory, for it cannot any longer hold you. So, you are here but you are not here. You seem to be of this world but you are not of this world, you are already there. You belong to him, you are of He. Then God takes charge of your life. He can no longer allow your life to go by itself. It becomes His responsibility. Your life in its totality has been taken up by Him. It is the ultimate consummation of the Path of Devotion, where you started as someone belonging to this world, striving to attain God and you end up by becoming the possession of God. You are no longer of the world and such consciousness gradually relates to a state of fullness and maturity and reaches a state when ultimately even this new consciousness of yourself purely in relation to the Divine, even that gradually begins to fall apart and your consciousness assumes a nature of an awareness only of the Divine. Then you are aware only of God. The self is forgotten and God-awareness dominates your consciousness and then you are in a state of blessedness, of peace, of Divine ecstasy, of beatitude. You are no longer there. God alone fills you.

That state ultimately joins the highest attainment of Jnana, the Vedantin, also. He also becomes filled with cosmic consciousness or Divine awareness and in the highest state in the Path of Devotion the devotee also becomes completely filled with pure God-awareness only. His self is forgotten, the self related to the world is forgotten, and it gives place to Self solely in relationship

to God and, ultimately, when that also progresses, then the Self draws completely away from world-consciousness and only God fills the consciousness. This is the consummation of the Path of Devotion.

Life is precious and it is very important that every moment of it should be utilised to gather human love and direct it through pure devotion to the Divine. Every moment should become a source of drawing nearer and nearer and deeper and deeper into a state of absorption in this God-relationship. That is the crowning glory of life. This is the greatest treasure -devotion of God-this is real life. Such a life knows no sorrow, it knows no restlessness or peacelessness, it never feels alone, it lacks nothing. When you have the Divine, you have everything. You are full. You have strength, you have life, you have joy.

May the Grace of God confer upon you the unparalleled wealth of Divine Love. May the teachings of the Holy Master Sivananda guide you along this path, the beautiful Path of Devotion, and may the goal of your life be attained through fulfilment in this great path of Bhakti Yoga.



Yoga, an Art and Science

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

The Yoga system, especially that propounded by the sage Patanjali, is a masterly science of psychology. We are asked to control the modifications of the mind-stuff in order to be able to have clear perception and true insight. Patanjali points out that we become normal only when we cease from thinking in terms of forms of the mental modification and begin to adopt quite a different way of perception. In other words, we have to rest in our own selves, first, in order that we may be healthy and also have a healthy perception of things. All types of objective thinking are considered in our system of Yoga as certain diseased conditions of consciousness, for in these states the consciousness is not-in-itself. Whenever it is not in a state of rest in itself it gets identified with the forms of the mind, and assumes for the time being their spatio-temporal shapes. In this empirical process the individual consciousness often comes in conflict with other such centres in the forms of other persons who have their own special modes of self-identification with other types of mental transformations. Human misery has its roots in this self-contradiction born of ignorance of the structure of the perceptible diversity and its basis in the One.

A successful life, and a happy life, is possible only when one is able to adjust and adapt the different sides of the personality in a harmonious way and the entire personality with the others that form the constituents of the world. In this sense, life is an art. What does an artist do? He has a definite idea of an end to be executed and achieved, he collects the necessary material as means for the purpose, and arranges the material in a methodical and harmonious manner. He selects the proper requisites, removes what is unshapely, adds what is necessary, and brings about a system and completeness in his work in consonance with the nature of the purpose in view. This is the case with great works of art, whether architecture and sculpture, painting and drawing, or music and literature. The essence

of art is the arrangement of material to produce rhythm, symmetry, order, fullness, and a sense of perfection so far as the mind can conceive of it. We have to arrange the pattern of life, with its forces of the outward Nature and inward impulses, so that there may not be any jarring element or inharmonious appearance unsuited to the purpose of realising the equilibrium of the universe as reflected in our personal lives, in the life of society, the community, the nation and the world. We do not belong merely to ourselves, not even merely to any particular society or country, but we are citizens of the universe to which we own a tremendous duty. And this duty is nothing but feeling and acting in a way that may not negate or violate the truth that the essence of the universe is an indivisible fullness. This art of self adjustment with the entire creation is called Yoga. It is an art that appeals to the being within, which is also without, at the same time. Yoga is an art in sofar as any successful practice of it demands of us a sort of genius and uncommon insight which cannot be expressed in mathematical or logical terms. But Yoga is also a science in the sense that it follows certain fixed laws and its principles are eternal, irrespective of class, creed, place and time. It is the knitting together, as it were, of the various springs of thought and action to form a connected and beautiful fabric in the universal scheme. It is the science of peace, of inner delight, and it requires that at one and the same moment we have to be at peace not only with the different levels of our being but also with the various strata of external life. A happy man who has been able to lead a successful life is one who is thoroughly friendly not only with the structural demands of his own body, mind, emotions, and intellect but also with the different elements that go to form the world outside. The Yoga system, by its technical terms, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, expresses in a highly mystic way the need for perfect discipline of the body, the vital forces, the senses of perception, the functions of the mind, the intellect and the reason from the standpoint of the universe taken as a whole. Life is a preparation for self-realisation, a training ground for the individual to transfigure itself in a self dedication to

the Absolute Reality. Some have compared this earthly life to a temporary halting of pilgrims in an inn, which is not the destination but only a means of help in the journey. We are not to take the experiences of this life as ends in themselves but as processes of self-advancement and chastening of the inner spirit for a higher fulfilment. Our joys and sufferings, our exhilarations and griefs, our prejudices and ideals are not to be valued as realities in themselves but as certain conditions which we have to overstep, and which will mean nothing to us when transcended in a deeper wisdom. Our present life is a flow of events, and nothing that changes can be called the real.

SACRIFICE AND DEDICATION IN LIFE

Herein comes into high relief the significance of the teaching that we have to perform actions without regard for their fruits, because the fruits are not in our hands, they are determined by the ultimate law of the universe, which, in the present condition of our minds we can neither understand nor follow. Our duty is to act, act in the right way, bearing in mind that we are fulfilling an inviolable and unavoidable imperative, not forced upon us by any outward mandate, but by the law of our own being, to ignore which would be nothing short of folly. To work with any fixed ulterior motive beforehand would be like naming a child before it is born. The position is that no one can clearly envisage or understand the nature of an effect which would follow a particular action. That we glibly talk of fixed results of visible causes and hope for desired ends of our actions only shows that we have a very narrow outlook and forget the fact that nothing in this interrelated universe is absolutely self dependent but requires the co-operation of infinite centres of force for it to come into being at all. Just take a concrete example. I say that a book placed on a table has the table as its support. Am I right ? Perhaps you would say I am. But we do not stoop to think here that the table itself is supported by the floor. And where is the support for the floor ? It is perhaps kept fixed by certain beams placed crosswise beneath it, which again are supported by walls,

the walls being supported by the foundation, and the foundation by the earth. Is the position of the earth self-dependent ? No. The earth's position and motion are governed by the attraction of other planets in relation to itself, and we should not forget here that the planets are held in position by the terrible gravitational force of the sun. The whole solar system is said to be rushing with a great velocity to another destination in the vast ocean of the Milky Way. Where are we, and where is the book placed on the table ? The existence of things is really marvellous, and, surely, our life is precarious. What right have we, then, under these circumstances, to expect what we have in our minds ? We can be justified in hoping only for that thing which is sanctioned by the unitary law of the universe taken as a single whole.

The Bhagavadgita, for example, exhorts us not to have attachment to things. Obviously, any outward attachment is not permissible in the scheme of things as they truly are. To which object am I to be attached, when everything out side me is inseparably related to me, and we are all mutually inclusive and determined in this magnificent home of God's creation? Where is that special endowment of reason, of which man so much boasts, when he acts as an animal in thinking that he can have special attitudes to particular objects and yet hope to be let off scot-free ? Every action has a reaction which comes with an equal force of nemesis and retribution, for every action is a sort of disturbance produced in the equilibrium of the universe, and the universe shall ever maintain its balance by rebutting the force of disturbance created in its being in the form of an action of thought. How marvellous is life, how grand, how just, and yet how relentless !

The correct spirit with which we have to work in this world is one of self-sacrifice and surrender to the Supreme Cause of all things. As a famous verse has it, whatever there is as this vast world, visible or heard of,- all this is pervaded inside and and outside, throughout, by the Eternal Spirit. Another verse tells us that we

have to see the immanent Divine in earth and water, in the mountains and the flame of fire, and that the whole world is nothing but the appearance of God. The correct perception is designated as Ishvaradrishti, the practice of the presence of God in each and everything, in every quarter and cranny, everywhere, and at all times. The essence of the Gita teaching is this, that the universe is the body of God, nay it is God Himself appearing to us through our senses, the mind and the intellect, that there is nothing outside of God ever existent, that man is bound to have prosperity, victory, happiness and lawful polity when he acts with this consciousness,- with the deep feeling that he is an instrument in the hands of the Absolute, that his actions are really not his but its, and that suffering is inevitable the moment he cuts his consciousness off from the Divine. The happy and the normal life is, therefore, the Divine Life.

INNER DISCIPLINE

This is a grand concept, and this the goal. But there are certain lesser aspects in our life which we cannot ignore if we are to be successful in our different endeavours for perfection. First, we have to use our emotions properly and adjust them in such a way that they do not create any discord in life's harmonious process. Second, we have always to attempt to make a fuller use of our personalities than we actually do in states of misconception, prejudice and ignorance. There has to be brought about a complete reorientation of our ways of thinking, in the light of eternal facts amidst which we exist. There is that absolute necessity to bring about in our selves those necessary changes, now and then, to attune ourselves to the vast universal environment. Think properly about yourselves, and understand your position in the expanse of the environment around you,-whether it is family, the community, the country, or the world. Face your weaknesses with an adamantine will, but know also your strengths, and use them to adapt yourselves to the circumstances in which you find yourselves at any given moment of time. In this you have to be very diligent, sincere and honest. Remember, always, that what is important is not so much what you

are, as to what extent you know why you are what you are, and how much you endeavour to improve yourselves in the right direction. Of course, do not be in a hurry. Understand well before you take a step. There cannot be a right attempt without a clear-cut ideal before it, and directing it. A race horse put to a plough or a plough horse put to race will not lead to any substantial result. We have to know our powers, our knowledge, and go only so far; not further.

If you are emotionally healthy, you will find that you will be comfortable with yourselves, and would not need the company of a crowd, or even of other persons related to you. No doubt, this is only one aspect of the question, because the most well-adjusted person should be comfortable and perfectly at ease either way. Watch yourselves in a crisis, and detect what you are. You can know your weaknesses when you are thwarted, opposed, threatened or when you find yourselves in danger. You can also know your buried desires and urges, your cravings and fears, when you are put to such a test. The training of the emotions and the development of strength within, however is not difficult for one who has a genuine conviction that he is backed up at all times by a mighty power that works everywhere in the cosmos, and that he has nothing to fear. This faith should be born of conviction, enlightened understanding, and a real love for the Supreme Being. This is self-mastery, by which one can invoke incredible powers to function at any time in one's life.

Do not have inner conflicts. Such conflicts are mostly results of the inability to fulfil the basic instinctive urges, which, again, is due to ignorance of one's hidden capacities and of the way by which to utilise properly the facilities provided under the conditions in which one is placed. You have to know clearly (1) what ought to be done, (2) what is capable of being done, (3) what has been done already, (4) why something has not been done yet, and (5) how to overcome the obstacles in a reasonable manner. This means that you have to be master of your own psychology. A successful life includes

physical, emotional, intellectual and moral fitness based on an integration of being in all its degrees, inwardly as well as outwardly. Know yourselves as higher than you now are. Summon the reserve forces which lie latent within, and use them for the constructive work of building the structure of life which is not merely yours, but of everyone, equally. When the diversity of beings is beheld as rooted in the One, and as having proceeded from the One, then does one attain to Perfection, says the Bhagavadgita. But the achievement of this end is hard, though possible for everyone. It demands inner toughness born of a perfect moral nature. A capacity to love and to serve all with the feeling of the presence of a common element behind everyone, to be truthful and honest and straightforward at any cost, to be able to feel for others as one does for oneself, not to do to others what would not be desirable for oneself, to have always a concern for the good of the whole world and not merely of a restricted group of persons, not to attempt at appropriating things which do not lawfully belong to oneself, to be perfectly continent and restrained in thought, word and deed, to be able to look at the world with a cosmic vision, and to act at all times with this consciousness, is the requisite qualification demanded of a truly cultured person and a seeker of Truth. We are neither wise nor right when we lose sight of this meaning of the educational process and act in a way that is not warranted by this vision of perfection. But success is near at hand, if only we would have a rightly directed will. And it is for our own good. Let us pray in the sublime words of the Upanishads :

Lead us from the unreal to the Real,

Lead us from darkness to Light,

Lead us from death to Immortality.



Law of Karma

(H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ)

Karma means not only action, but also the result of an action. The consequence of an action is really not a separate thing. It is a part of the action and cannot be divided from it. Breathing, thinking, talking, seeing, hearing, eating, are all Karmas. Thinking is mental Karma. Karma is the sum total of our acts, both in the present life and in the preceding births.

Any deed, any thought that causes an effect is called a Karma. The law of Karma means the law of Causation. Wherever there is a cause, there an effect must be produced. A seed is a cause for the tree which is an effect. The tree produces seeds and becomes the cause for the seeds.

The law of Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines not only in Hinduism, but also in Buddhism and Jainism. As a man sows, so he shall reap. This is law of Karma. If you do an evil action, you must suffer for it. If you do a good action, you must get happiness. There is no power on this earth which can stop the actions from yielding their fruits. Every thought, every word and every deed are, as it were, weighed in the scales of eternal, divine Justice. The law of Karma is inexorable.

Things do not happen in this universe by accident or chance in a disorderly manner. They happen in regular succession. They follow each other in a regular order. There is a certain definite connection between what is being done now by you, and what is to happen in the future.

You are the master of your own fate. You are the architect for your own fortune. You are responsible for what you suffer. You are responsible for your present state. If you are happy, it has been your own making. If you are miserable, it has also been your own making. Every action bears a fruit, sooner or later. A virtuous action produces pleasure as its effects. An evil deed causes pain.

Desire produces Karma. You work and exert to acquire the objects of your desire. Karma produces its fruits as pain or pleasure. You will have to take births after births to reap the fruits of your Karmas. This is law of Karma.

Man is threefold in his nature. He consists of *Ichha* (desire, feeling), *Jnana* (knowing) and *Kriya* (willing). These three fashion his Karma. He knows objects like chair, tree. He feels joy and sorrow. He wills to do this or not to do that.

If you put a seed in the earth, it sends up a little stem. Then leaves come out of the stem. Then come flowers and fruits. There are seeds again in the fruits. The mango seed only produces a mango tree. If you sow rice, you cannot expect a crop of wheat. The same sort of seed produces the same kind of plant. A human being alone is born from the womb of a woman; a horse from a horse; a dog from a dog. Similarly, if you sow the seed of an evil action, you will reap a harvest of pain and suffering. If you sow the seed of a virtuous action, you will reap a harvest of pleasure. This is law of Karma.

Whatever you sow by your actions come back to you. If you make others happy through service, charity and kind acts, you sow happiness like a seed and it will give you the fruit of happiness. If you make others unhappy through harsh words, insult, ill-treatment, cruel acts, oppression, etc., you sow unhappiness like a seed and it will give you the fruit of pain, suffering, misery and unhappiness. This is the immutable law of Karma.

Your actions in the past are responsible for your present condition. Your present actions will shape or mould your future. There is nothing chaotic or capricious in this world. You become good by your good actions and bad by your evil actions.

If you entertain evil thoughts, you must suffer the consequences. You will be in difficulties. You will be surrounded by unfavourable circumstances. You will blame your surroundings

and circumstances. Understand the law and live wisely. Entertain noble thoughts. You will be happy always.

Behind the action there are desire and thought. A desire for an object arises in the mind. Then you think how to get it. Then you exert to possess it. Desire, thought and action always go together. They are the three threads, as it were, that are twisted into the cord of Karma.

You sow an action and reap a habit. You sow a habit and reap a character. You sow a character and reap your destiny. Hence destiny is your own make-up. You have built it. You can undo it by entertaining noble thoughts, and doing virtuous actions and changing your mode of thinking. Now you are thinking that you are the body, Mr. so and so. Start the anticurrent of thought. Think that you are all-pervading immortal Brahman. Brahman you will become. This is an immutable law.

Every action produces a threefold effect. It gives you an appropriate reward or fruit. It also affects your character. It leaves behind an impression in your mind. This impression will urge you to repeat the act again. The impression will assume the form of a thought-wave in the mind on account of a stimulus either external or internal. An action produces an effect in the world also.

Conduct or behaviour reveals your character. Conduct also moulds your character. Cultivation of good conduct needs rigorous discipiline and constant vigilance. You will have to watch every thought, word and action. You must be extremely careful when you conduct yourself with others. With all your good intentions you will be carried away by the force of your previous wrong impressions, instincts and impulses. Even highly educated people lack in behaviour. Good behaviour indicates that you have a refined or polished, disciplined mind, real good spiritual culture. The practice of Japa, Pranayama and Mauna or vow of silence will help you to control the impulses, etc.

Thought moulds your character. If you entertain noble thoughts, you will develop a noble character, and if you entertain evil thoughts, you will develop a base character. This is the immutable law of nature. Therefore, you can deliberately shape your character by cultivaing sublime thoughts. Thought materialises and becomes an action. If you allow the mind to dwell on good, elevating thoughts, you will do naturally good and laudable actions.

A boatman without oars, rudder and sails is carried away helplessly by the winds and currents, but a clever boatman with oars, sails and rudder, ably directs the boat in any direction he likes and reaches the other shore safely. Even so he who knows the laws of nature, the law of thought, the law of Karma and the law of cause and effect can sail fearlessly in this ocean of *Samsara* and reach the other shore of fearlessness and immortality quite safely. He will utilise the helping forces to his best advantage and neutralise the opposing forces skilfully with the help of the knowledge of laws. Knowledge is a torchlight. Hence, knowledge is absolutely indispensable. Ignorance is the greatest sin. An ignorant man becomes a victim or a slave of nature.

Karma is of three kinds; viz., *Sanchita* (accumulated works), Prarabdha (fructifying works) and *Kriyamana* or *Agami* (current works). Sanchita is all the accumulated Karmas of the past. Part of it is seen in the character of man, in his tendencies and aptitudes, capacities, inclinations, desires etc. Tendencies come from this. Prarabdha is that portion of the past Karma which is responsible for the present body. That portion of the Sanchita Karma which influences human life in the present incarnation is called Prarabdha. It is ripe for reaping. It cannot be avoided or changed. It is only exhausted by being experienced. You pay your past debts. Prarabdha Karma is that which has begun and is actually bearing fruit. It is selected out of the mass of the Sanchita Karma. Kriyamana is that Karma which is now being made for the future.

It is also called Agami Or Vartamana.

In Vedantic literature, there is a beautiful analogy. The bowman has already sent an arrow and it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows in the quiver on his back is the Sanchita; the arrow he has shot is Prarabdha and the arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is Agami. Of these, he has perfect control over the Sanchita and Agami, but he must surely work out his Prarabdha,. The past Karma which has begun to take effect he has to experience.

There is another beautiful analogy also. A granary represents the Sanchita Karma, that portion taken from the granary and put in the shop for sale corresponds to Prarabdha, and that which is sold daily represents Agami.

The whole lot of Sanchita Karma is destroyed by attaining knowledge of Brahman, the Eternal. It can be greatly modified by entertaining lofty, divine thoughts and doing virtous actions. Agami Karma can be destroyed by expiatory rites, or *Prayaschita*, and by removing the idea of agency through *Nimitta Bhava* (instrument in the hands of God), or *Sakshi Bhava* (silent witness of the actions of the senses and of the mind).

You have no *Bhoga-Svatantrata* (freedom of experience) but you have *Karma Svatantrata* (freedom of action). That is the reason why Lord Krishna says : "*Karmanyeva adhikaras te ma phaleshu kadachana* - Thy business is with action only, never with its fruits". Janaka and others attained to perfection by action. You can change your character, your thoughts and desires. Man's will is ever free. Through selfishness his will has become impure. He can render his will pure, strong and dynamic by getting rid of his base desires, likes and dislikes. Every soul is like a husbandman who has got a plot of land. The acreage, the nature the of soil, the conditions of weather are all predetermined. But the husbandman

is quite at liberty to till the earth, manure it and get good crops or to allow it to remain as waste land.

What you are now at present is the result of what you thought and did in the past. What you shall be in the future will be the result of what you think and do now. You find an environment which is best-suited to the tendencies you acquired in a former life. You can create better conditions for the future. You can make your Karma what you choose. You can rise to a very high state of perfection. You can become an Indra, you may become a perfect Yogin, you can change your character, thoughts and actions. Therefore, Bhishma and Vasistha have placed Purushartha or exertion above destiny.

Selfish Karma leads you to rebirth and that rebirth generates new Karma, while working off the old. Get rid of selfish Karma if you wish to get rid of the miseries of rebirth. Selfless works will not bind you. They will purify your heart and lead to the descent of the divine light and grace. Understand the law of Karma and the law of cause and effect. Think rightly. Act nobly. Meditate regularly and attain eternal bliss and immortality.



Sadhana for Manonasa

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

Desires never perish by fulfilling them. If on the other hand you withdraw the fuel, the fire will be automatically put out, and the more you study and get at the root of the hidden lurking desires the better you will be in a position to root them out. The desires that come on the surface of the mind have their roots in the subconscious, and in as much as the roots are hidden, you will have to daily do the digging of the mind, and going to the root of these desires. Therefore, Gurudev has prescribed : set apart a time when there is no external distraction and then go to a place where there is no external distraction, and sit there and feel that you are the witness of the mind. Just allow the mind to wander for a while and see how it behaves, and try to delve within. All our time we are engaged in drawing the mind outward. Make the mind inward and try to see within yourself what is going on, and it requires practice, it requires regular practice, or else we will be thinking we are looking into the mind, but in the processes, we would be going with the mind. You should delve inward, introspect. You must do a twofold process. One is diverting the mind-rays inward, and when you go inward, focus keenly on certain part of your mind and analyse it, dissect it. If you cannot see a place which is in darkness, you throw the powerful search-light upon it. Similarly throw the mind inward and begin to see the things inside. Supposing a thing is far away, you are not able to see it. You squint through a telescope. Similarly you should analyse the part which is not visible, more minutely, you should analyse it in detail, separately, like looking through a microscope. Then you will come to know more of your mind:- what kind of Vrittis they are, whether they are Sattvic Vrittis or Rajasic Vrittis or Tamasic Vrittis. You begin to analyse intelligently. Here, we require a little bit of Viveka. We have to be careful of two things. One thing is we should not go inward with partiality. If you are studying the mind, be impartial, because this introspection is done with the purpose of ejecting out all that is undesirable and

supplying all that is required. Therefore, you should humbly go about this work. If after studying the mind, you are full of self-satisfaction, if you are satisfied with whatever is there in the mind, such introspection and self-analysis will serve no purpose. Therefore, you should go with a critical attitude. Just as you find out the defects of other persons, with the same critical mind, you should find out your own defects. Otherwise, the benefit of introspection and self-analysis will be lost.

CLEANSING THE MIND

If as a result of your introspection, you find in your mind certain things which are not desirable, you should find out the means of removing those defects. As I said, first of all, you must be impartial and should not try to justify what you find inside. Self-justification, self-approbation is not what is meant by introspection. You should go with a critical, fault-finding spirit, and once you find out your defects, be practical. Have some practical device to remove the defects. You should find out how to make the best capital out of what you have discovered in your moments of self-introspection and Sadhana. This is the practical aspect of Kriya Yoga. Thorough purification can only come, if there is thorough, impartial introspection, and practical steps are taken by you to remove the defects. This introspection should be done daily. Daily you should throw out some rubbish. Then only Kriya Yoga will become effective. I would say that Kriya Yoga is the most important. This is like the foundation. Without foundation you cannot put up the building. So self-introspection, self-analysis, eradication of vices, development of virtues and being established in Sadachara come under Kriya Yoga.

IGNORE NOT SMALL ERRORS

Non-cooperate with the mind. Hunt out your defects through self-investigation, and overcome them through practical Sadhana. And together with this, we have to take two more important steps,

i.e., in living the divine life, we have to give importance to each detail. Do not be too fastidious, do not worry about small details, but the fundamentals have to be kept. Stick to the fundamentals. Each Sadhaka should bear in mind that divine life is to be lived in small things. If you are divine in small details, you can be divine in big things. You cannot afford to be undivine in small things and expect to be divine in big things. If your Yoga becomes practical, if your Vedanta becomes practical in little things, then the great achievement will come as a matter of course. Here we find a serious danger. Sadhakas think that the details do not matter much. They think that it does not matter if they use a single harsh word. The Sadhaka thinks, "There is no harm in uttering a harsh word. I am quite calm inwardly. God wants only the heart", but such a heart cannot come unless every word of yours is full of love, compassion. The heart is made up of only the sum total of all little actions and little words. It is not possible to have a wonderful heart inside, and indulge in every type of actions and words. Every action goes to form one's character even as every drop goes to form the ocean. Day-to-day movements of men constitiute the very essence of divine living, the very essence of Yoga and Vedanta. One should not commit the mistake of running away with the idea that by merely having a great idealism only, can perfect goodness manifest in all his actions, words and thoughts. Unless one is careful in his day-to-day life and moulds his life in accordance with his idealism, idealism cannot bear fruit. If one is careful in his day-to-day life, and sees that the broad principles of divine living which go to make up the foundation of spiritual life, are observed then the edifice will come by itself.

BROAD PRINCIPLES IN YOGA

What are those broad principles? Truthfulness, compassion, purity,– these are the broad things which have to cover our entire life down to the minutest details. A Sadhaka cannot afford to forget this detailed living of divine life, and his whole life, at least in the beginning, should be characterised by restraint. He should restrain

his tongue. Do not think that you can eat anything and meditate well. If a Sadhaka thinks that he can eat anything and meditate, he is deceiving himself. Yoga is not a toy, which you can easily take and play with. It is an iron-fort lodging well-equipped soldiers. Yoga is not an easy thing, though saints say that Yoga is easy in order to make it attractive to all. Therefore, every action should be done with proper examination.

SELECTION OF FOOD

The quality of food that you take, its quantity, and the time you take food, all are important. A little immoderate food or improper time of taking food may affect your system and render meditation difficult. You may not take costly food like Badam, but at least take moderate quantity, take Sattvic food. The Whole body should be restrained. You should live a life of moderation. When Gurudev sings his song of "Eat a little, drink a little," we have to understand it in its proper sense. There are two parts of this song. "Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little." When he says these things he means 'moderation'. These things should not be done too much. These are not said in the sense that they are essential. It means that you must not overdo them.

MODERATION IN EVERYTHING

You must sleep only a little. You must talk only a little. You should not be a patient of lingual diarrhoea. Move a little. This means that you should move a little, and not waste your energy and time by moving about always. The instinctive life of eating, drinking, talking etc., should be kept to the minimum. The other portion, wherein Gurudev says, "Do Japa a little. Do Asana a little. Do Kirtan a little,"—means not that they should not be done too much, but here it is the other way round. Here, Gurudev says that everyone of these items is essential, and all these items should find a place in your daily programme. Asana, Pranayama, Japa, Kirtana, Meditation, Vichara, all these things must, find a place in your daily

life. They are indispensable items which should find a place in your daily routine, and the more you increase them, the better. And those things of your animal nature, that life which is purely physical, sensual and bodily, such as, eating, drinking etc.– you should keep within the rational minimum. All gross things that merely pertain to the body should be kept to the minimum and all these higher aspects of Sadhana should be given proper place in your daily programme. Therefore, this is the broad general outline of divine life or spiritual living, for you. All these, Japa, meditation, Kirtan, etc. form the positive side, and living a life of restraint, and not fulfilling the undue desires of the mind and senses, understanding that to fulfil such demands is to become greater and greater slaves of the mind and its promptings, and always being based upon self-restraint and inwardness and making the best use of your quiet hours in introspection and analysis, so that your Kriya Yoga may be fulfilled. This sums up the essential aspects of divine life.



A Survey of Indian Thought

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

The development of the religious and philosophic thought in India comprises a many-sided presentation of the higher aspirations in man. While the Veda Samhitas embody the prayers of the human spirit to the Universal Reality revealed in creation and record the vision of the One in many, the upanishads represent an attempt to dive into the One from the forms of the many. Though modern history sees an advance of thought from the Samhitas to the Upanishads, tradition does not permit any such bifurcation and sees in them two types of the vision of Reality, the former emphasising its aspect as creation and the latter its being, as it is. There is no doubt, a tendency to view the essential nature of Reality as transcending creation, but it is not possible to ignore the creational aspect as a realm outside Reality, for creation also is within it. From this point of view, it seems quite reasonable to follow the way of ancient tradition that the Samhitas and the Upanishads are not to be divided as inferior and superior, but as pictures of one side and another side of Reality. It is an important aspect in the interpretation of the Vedas to regard them as a single body of scriptural lore, of which the Upanishads form the consummation. Without taking the purely historical view that the Upanishads transcend the Samhitas in their value, the former may be said to be an improvement upon the content of the latter in the sense that the Samhitas look upon creation and its Maker more in their cosmological significance maintaining a kind of awe-inspring distance between man and God, while the Upanishads stir up within man a consciousness of the immediacy, in his own being, of that cosmic grandeur of God in creation. The distinction of God, world and soul, when it is handled by the Upanishads, resolves itself into the unitary Absolute.

But a very meaningful point of view which is sought to be emphasised here is the importance of the Epics and Puranas in the history of Indian thought. The ancient sages were quick to appreciate the necessity to appeal to the various sides of human nature and to

alter the method of teaching in adjustment with this need. As it was stated earlier, Reality and creation are not to be regarded as two facts or problems to be encountered but two ways of witnessing the same thing. The human mind is composed not only of the rational powers but also the emotional and the instinctive elements which feel the presence and working of certain truths that rationality cannot explain adequately. The Epics and Puranas answer to that aspect of human nature which is other than the ratiocinating or the investigative. It is human egoism which asserts that only scientific discoveries and affirmations in their modern sense are real and there is nothing true in the world which observation and experiment cannot certify. It is forgotten that reason is not all and science is not the last word in knowledge. The heart revolts against the conclusion of science that tears of grief consist merely of certain chemical substances or that the beauty of a painting is just the effect of a combination of colours. Religion, likewise, is not an invention of human crotchet or an outcome of fear or even a social necessity but the answer to a living surge of conscious aspiration which cannot be intelligible either to reason or to science. Human nature is not a combination of scientific facts or a bundle of physical laws or chemical elements, but manifests in itself a meaning higher than all observable values in the world of mathematics, physics, chemistry or biology. The religious spirit of the Epics and Puranas is different from the beaten track of logical philosophy, for it reads an eternal meaning in the temporal structure of the world. The power and purpose of an Avatara, for example, infuses into the historical process of the universe a truth which is above history. Everything that is human has a touch of the mathematical and the logical in it–whether it is history or science. But the eternal religion is that which feels the existence and activity of a supernal Reality, even in what is earthly. The personalities and events described in the puranas cannot always be taken as myths and fables which have no substance in them, for the universe is nothing but the Absolute beheld through the channels of human perception. In their attempt at a bringing together of the temporal and the eternal,

the Epics present before us a picture of divine perfection commingled with human weakness. In these records of cosmic history, the usual meanings of the past, present and future assume a different suggestiveness and it is futile to read into them a mere human viewpoint of understanding. It is here that we come face to face with the fact that religion is neither a social practice nor a human contrivance but the perennial activity of timeless being.

The Bhagavadgita is a part of the Mahabharata and thus occurs in the context of an Epic, and so it is called a Smriti (secondary revelation), as distinguished from the Sruti (primary revelation), which are the Vedas and the Upanishads. Yet, the Gita plays a unique role in the history of the religious and philosophic thought. The Upanishads are like an extensive forest ranging over a wide area and covering almost everything which may be said to be of the nature of reality. The Bhagavadgita is, on the other hand, a kind of garden of select plantations which are deliberately nurtured, keeping in view the needs of human psychology. It is at once rationalistic, volitional, emotional and charged with a high spirit of activity. In the Upanishads, Reality seems to be musing over itself and contemplating its own glories, while in the Bhagavadgita it speaks to man in a language which is intelligible to the mind that sees meaning in pleasure and pain, reward and punishment, progress and evolution, bondage and liberation. The Bhagavadgita is a world-gospel which tries to link man with God, enlighten him on the concrete relation subsisting between the world and the Absolute, and solace him that there is a way leading from the finite to the Infinite.

Nevertheless, the Upanishads may be said to have sown the seeds for every thought that occurred later. In spite of their excessive concern with the transempricial Reality, whatever be its relation to the cosmos of creation, they make here and there profound statements, though at random, which sum up the principles of ethics, psychology and the path that leads to be the Supreme

Being. The Bhagavadgita is a detailed accentuation of some of the terse observations made already in the Upanishads. We have, for example, a statement on the nature of the universal Virat in a single verse of the Mundaka Upanishad, which may itself be said to be an inspiration after the Purushasukta of the Samhitas. The Isa, Katha and the Svetasvatara Upanishads have verses that embody some of the important themes of the Bhagavadgita, which, on the whole manifests the spirit of God descended into the field of action.

The Yoga-Vasishtha rises to a high watermark in the philosophic thought of India. It is a classic inimitable in its kind. Through elaborate description, almost in an epic style, it works upon the fundamental principles enunciated in the Upanishads and combines philosophy with a lofty psychology by which it explains creation, evolution and involution purely from a spiritualistic point of view. In this way, it tries to give an ultimate explanation of everything in terms of the Infinite consciousness which manifests itself as the objects of experience on one side and the experiencing subjects on the other side. The sorrows which follow in the wake of every effort of man for acqusition of happiness in a world of transient phenomena, the knowledge needed to diagnose the common malady of everyone and the ethical prerequisites to be cultivated for the attainment of true freedom are its main subjects. The uniqueness of the methodology of the Yoga Vasishtha is in its attempt to analyse all things in terms of consciousness which is the ultimate reality of everything. Health and disease, happiness and misery, success and failure, bondage and freedom are all explicable in terms of the right adjustment or maladjustment of consciousness. Finally, even birth and death are traced to this mysterious cause which cannot be directly seen, as it is involved in the seeking consciousness itself. Another text, known as the Tripurarahasya *(Jnana-kanda)*, follows the lead of the Yoga-Vasishtha in the treatment of a spiritual idealism which it regards as the alpha and omega of all things.

An interesting part of the manifestation of Indian Philosophy

s religion is its concept of the pantheon which has an immense ractical significance in the day-to-day life of the country. The gods Devatas) hold such sway over the minds of persons that the neological evaluation of life may be regarded as a common place hroughout India. A final interpretation of any problem hinges upon *Daiva* or a presiding deity, a heritage of thought which may be aid to have directly come down to the present day from the Jpanishads that viewed the universe as constituted of the object *Adhibhuta*), subject (*Adhyatma*) and deity (*Adhidaiva*). There is othing which is not involved in this triadic relation, in any stage of reation. It is interesting to note this concept of deity entering as an ivariable concomitant of every stratum of evolution in the recent hilosophy of emergent evolution, particularly in Samuel Alexander, who propounds this theme in his *Space, Time and Deity*. Herein he akes the principle deity unavoidable in the evolutionary process n a *nisus* to progress upwards. It is needless to add that the panishads have already, many centuries back, anticipated in their tuitions this novel doctrine of deity, with an added significance nd purpose, and even today it is impossible to remove from the inds of the Indian people the belief in the governance of the ibject-object relation by a presiding deity. It is this presiding principle hich the Bhagavadgita confirms as the final deciding factor in all ctions and processes of man and the world. The crystallisation of is doctrine is the great religious theology of India, which posits rious deities as the guardians of the cosmos and sets forth rules f their worship in the interest of man's march towards his great estiny. Theology is an essential part of religion, which is a name r philosophy in practice.

The rules of conduct are a part of the religious way of life. ne *Smritis* are the codes which lay down the laws of human chaviour in one's personal capacity as well as in society. The ncient dictum of the Veda that *Satya* (truth as being) and *Rita* ruth as law) are the primary principles of Reality and its anifestation is the background of the canons of *Dharma*, or a life

of righteousness. It is the intention of the Smritis to make explic the forms of righteousness as they manifest themselves in practic life, which are only implicit in the principles of *Satya* and *Rita* or the account of creation given in the Upanishads. The modes living according to class (*Varna*) and order (*Asrama*) instituted f the purpose of ensuring mutual cooperation in society are the ma contents of the Smritis. These texts not only deal with the ethic problems of man as an individual and as a member of a family or society in general, but also dilate upon the rules of administratio politics and statesmanship, legal principles and statecraft. The Smri of Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parasara, the Santi-Parva of t Mahabharata and the Arthasastra of Kautilya are the prima sources of information on this subject. The social, political and leg systems enunciated in these codes are ultimately spiritual in th tone, for they analyse the life of man into the fourfold scheme practical endeavour, known as rectitude of conduct (*Dharma*), a a righteous pursuit of economic values (*Artha*) and of the fulfilme of one's normal desire (*Kama*), to culminate in the blossoming the flower of existence into the experience of eternal bliss (*Moksh* There is, thus, no clash between the individual and society, m and the State, or between God and creation.



Thought Creates The World

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Everything in the material universe about us had its origin first in thought. From this, it took its form. Every castle, every statue, every painting, every piece of mechanism—in short, everything had its birth, its origin, first in the mind of the one who formed it before it received its material expression or embodiment.

Mind has got various preoccupations. When an artist begins to draw a picture on the canvas, he draws the picture out of the materials preconceived by the mind.

After all, the world is merely an idea or thought. Just as a seed begins to germinate at its proper time and place, so also the seer (knower) appears as the visible through the Sankalpa of the mind (the visible being no other than the seer itself). When the mind ceases to think, the world vanishes and there is bliss indescribable. When the mind begins to think, immediately the world reappears and there is suffering.

"*Cogito, ergo sum*—I think, therefore I am ." This is Descartes' fundamental basis of philosophy. This is in accordance with Sri Sankara's statement that the Atman cannot be illusive; for he who would deny it, even in denying it, witnesses its reality.

The universe is rendered visible by mind. But , it is a pity that nobody has seen the mind save a seer. When you seriously and unceasingly think over the nature of the mind, it is nothing. When you begin to analyse the mind, it is a nothing. It dwindles to airy nothing. It is a bundle of thoughts and the thought 'I' is the root of all thoughts. This 'I' is a false idea, non-entity. when the root of all thoughts vanishes into nothing, where is the boasted mind?

The first thought that arose in your mind was 'Aham', 'I' . The last thought or Vritti that will arise in the mind before it is

absorbed in Brahman will be Brahmakara Vritti which is produced by your feeling that you are Infinity.

UNIVERSE, A CREATION OF THE COSMIC MIND

The universe is not a mental creation of the Jiva. One single, organised thought of the Cosmic Mind (Hiranyagarbha) has materialised as the seeming universe. This phenomenal universe is but an outcome of the Divine Will, seeking to be real through the workings of the mind.

Before you write out a drama, you have a vivid mental picture of the whole drama in your mind. Then you write it out in succession in three or four acts, as the case may be. When it is staged, it is acted in succession, part by part. Similarly, the universe with its movements is a vivid mental picture in the Cosmic Mind–in the mind of Isvara. There is neither past nor future for Him. Everything is 'present' for Him. There is 'neither 'near' nor 'far' for Him . Every place is 'here' Every time is 'now' . The events come out in succession on the stage of the long world-drama as Time rolls on. Atoms rotate continuously. Old becomes new and new becomes old. In reality there is no such thing as old; there is no such thing as single. The Jivas with individual minds are witnessing the Events in succession. But the Isvara knows all events at one sweep. He is Sarvajna (all-knowing). He is sarvavid (all-understanding) also. He knows every details of His creation. The Cosmic Mind creates the Maya. Individual minds receive things under delusion.

This universe is nothing but a mode of the mind, self-evolved from Brahman, the cause of the universe. All the universes which appear only through Manas are no other than its modes. The mind is subjectively consciousness and objectively it is this universe. Hence, this all-pervading world is nothing but consciousness itself.*

* *The jiva and the Universe are Brahman in their innate condition only.*

ISVARA AND MAYA

All the Samskaras float in Maya . Suppose there is very big mirror. You can see in the mirror the reflection of all persons who move in the street, all carts, cars and carriages which pass along the road. You can be simply watching these movements from a distance in the mirror without being affected in the least. Even so, the movements of this whole universe take place in the biggest mirror of Maya. Isvara or the Lord of the universe is simply witnessing everything . He is the silent Sakshi. When the Adrishta (the hidden power in Karmas) of the Jivas ripens, Isvara simply wills and the universe is projected.

REALITY OF THE UNIVERSE LIES IN SANKALPA OF MANAS

This ever-agitated Manas(mind), having come into existence out of the ineffable Brahman, creates the world according to its own Sankalpa (thoughts). This legerdemain of the universe springs out of the Sankalpa of Manas. It is through the Sankapla of your Manas that the universe appears to be and it is this Sankalpa that is asked to be given up by you if you wish to soar to the One Reality beyond the universe. "*Sarvasankalpasannyasi yogarudhahtadochyate*—He is said to be established in Yoga who has renounced all his Sankalpas" (Gita, VI-4).

With the growth of paltry Sankalpa, there will arise the universe; with the extinction of the former, the latter also will disappear. With the annihilation of Sankalpa, all conception of differences between the seer and the seen will vanish and then the Reality of Brahman will begin to shine uninterrupted . Then the shadow of all the universe—moveable and fixed—will be found absorbed in It in a non-dual state.

With the contemplation of 'I' , the whole train of ideas of the universe will set in; otherwise, all the universe will vanish as

instantaneously as darkness before the sun. Mind and 'I' are one. Destroy the 'I' , then the mind is destroyed.

"Manah-kalpitam jagat- (Creation of) the world is an imagination of the mind" (Yogavasishtha). This legerdemain of the world is enacted by the mind and the mind alone-*"Manomatram jagat.* What you call world is the mind only." Mind is world. The mind manifests itself as the external world. This universe is no other than the mind itself. Like a dream generating another dream in it, the mind, having no visible form, will generate non-existent visibles. This perishable universe exists only when the mind exists, but disappears with the absence of the latter. If the mind, which is the instrument of knowledge, perception and activity, vanishes, with it disappears this subjective world also.

There is a corresponding notion and object for every Sabda (sound). There is a notion and an object for the Sabda 'Cow'. Maya is deceiving you through Sabda-jala. The whole world is a mere notion, mere idea. It is Sankalpa-matra. It is Bhrantimatra. It is Kalpanamatra. It is Akasamatra. It exists in name only. "*Vacharambhanam vikaro namadheyam mrittiketyeva satyam-* All modifications being only names based upon words, the truth being that all is clay." The whole world is a combination of five elements. Analyse, realise the illusory nature of all objects and abandon all false objects. When you begin to analyse, the whole world vanishes and with it the notion, sound, and objects also.

The happiness and misery experienced in this world are caused by the working of the mind. All the hosts of pains and pleasures arise from the mind only. They will perish if the mind perishes through stainless discrimination and spiritual Sadhana. The three worlds are created for the pleasures and pains of the mind. Suspension of the mental activity will cause the three worlds to disappear with their misery. With the destruction of the mind, all the three periods of time vanish into nothing. By controlling the mind, all occult powers are acquired. If the mind is not controlled, all else become useless and painful. Therefore, the mind should be annihilated.

MIND FUNCTIONS WITHIN THREE CATEGORIES

Mind always functions within the categories of time, space and causation. These three categories are mental creations only. A coconut tree is not really twenty feet high. The height is only a mental interpretation. There are vibrations only outside. It is the mind that creates length, breadth, height, thickness, dimensions, void, square, etc. A distance of two miles comes out of feeling only. You actually feel that you have walked so much distance. When you transcend the mind, all these categories vanish entirely. Annihilate the mind, therefore, through Brahmavichara. You will enter a realm of Peace and Ananda which is eternal, infinite and causeless (Parama Karana).

THE 'WHY' AND 'HOW' OF THE UNIVERSE A TRANSCENDENTAL QUESTION

Mr. Narain, my friend who is standing before me, is my own mental creation. Even this world is my own mental creation.

Abhava or non-existence is said to be an object of perception, since non-existence of a thing means its existence somewhere else.

According to the idealistic theory, there is no world at all in reality. It is all mere mental imagination. This is Vijnanavada of the Buddhists.

According to the realistic theory, the world is a solid reality. Even the dualist school of Madhva and Visishtadvaita school of Ramanuja and Raja Yogic school of Maharshi Patanjali hold that the world is real (Jagat Satyam).

Kant has demonstrated that space, time and causation are not objective realities, but only subjective forms of our intellect, and the unavoidable conclusion is that the world, so far as it is extended in space, is running on in time and ruled throughout by causality, is merely a representation of our mind and nothing beyond it.

A finite mind that is gross and conditioned by time, space and causation cannot comprehend the why and how of the universe, a question that is transcendental. The question has never been answered by anybody, by any Sastra, by any sage or Acharya. Do not rack your mind on this point. You can never get a solution for this problem. It is *Mauj* of Brahman to create this universe. It is His Lila-vilasa, It is His Maya. It is His Svabhava.

NON-EXISTENCE OF THE WORLD-WHAT IT MEANS

The Abhava of Jagat (non-existence of the world) or its Nasa (destruction) does not mean the annihilation of mountains, lakes, trees and rivers. When your Nischaya (determination) that this world is Mithya (unreal, illusory) gets stronger and stronger and when you are well-established on this idea that this world is illusory like Mrigatrishna (mirage), this alone is destruction of the world.

You cannot destroy a mountain, but you can destroy the idea of mountain.

The universe is like a Svapna in Jagrat. Just as there is the image in the mirror, this world is a big image in the mind-mirror. The mind is like a big *Chaddar* (thick cloth) painted with various pictures. There is neither painter nor canvas nor any material for painting such as brush, dish, oil, powder, etc. The picture of the universe appears depicted on the spotless Jnana-Akasa (knowledge-space).

The play of the mind arising out of Chaitanya (pure consciousness) constitutes this universe. Mind is Maya. Maya is mind. The workings of the mind are nothing but the workings of Maya itself. Attraction or attachment in the mind towards forms is Maya. Identification of one's own self with the mind is Maya.

HOW THE MIND MANIFESTS AS THE WORLD

The motion or vibration of Prana moves the mind. The movement of the mind generates the universe. The mind manifests itself as the external world. Nama-Rupa (names and forms) arise owing to Vikshepa Sakti, one of the powers of Maya. The Vikshepa force operates both in the Jagrat and the Svapna states. The whold world is projected on account of this power only. In sleep, it disappears.

The world enters the mind through the eyes, ears, tongue (speech) and old Samskaras. If you remain in seclusion, you can shut out these first three doors. Through Vichara (right enquiry of Supreme Self), you can destroy the Samskaras, the fourth route. Then Jnana (Knowledge of the Self) will dawn.

All the universe with their heterogeneity, though really Atman-Jnana, shine as world only through our illusory mind, like the blueness of the sky which is really non-existent. The Self-light of Para Brahman alone is appearing as the mind or this motley universe. Mind is Prajna Sakti. Matter is Bhuta-Sakti. Prana is Kriya-Sakti of Brahman. Everything belongs to Brahman. In reality, there is no Jiva. There is Brahman only.

The mind which ever rises and falls with the ebb of desires, fancies this illusory universe to be through its ignorance; but it should be informed of the real nature of this world, then it will cognise it to be Brahman itself.



Your Real Problem

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

Radiant Immortal Atman! Beloved and blessed children of Light assembled in Gurudev's spiritual presence in this sacred Samadhi Hall! May the divine grace of the supreme Eternal Reality, the one reality behind ever-changing names and forms, enable you to become firmly established in the noble ideals and divine principles that you have adopted for liviing your chosen way of life and in the lofty spiritual qualities which are required and are indispensably necessary to become firmly established in the sublime spiritual life. May His divine grace enable you to develop the inner spiritual strength necessary to cultivate successfully the noble divine qualities, *daivi sampada*, like *sama, dama, titiksha, uparati, sraddha* and *samadhana* (calmness of mind, control of senses, endurance, self-withdrawal, faith and proper concentration), like *viveka, vairagya* and *mumukshutva* (discrimination, dispassion and a burning desire for liberation),like the qualities of *ahimsa, satyam* and brahmacharya.

And may the grace of Gurudev make it possible for you to not only be firmly established in these sublime divine qualities, but also to effectively apply them in living your day-to-day life, in your daily thinking, feeling, speech and actions. May Gurudev's *guru-kripa* grant you the insight and wisdom to effectively adhere to and apply these noble principles and divine qualities in your relationship with life around you, with your fellow beings whom you have to deal with in the practical living of your life in the *vyavaharic* field.

Ideal is one thing. Idealism becoming a living force in your day-to-day life, in your being and doing, in the manner in which you relate yourself to your fellow beings in the field of daily *vyavahara*, that becomes another thing. That becomes practical idealism. That becomes applied divinity, *daivi sampada* in action. This is more difficult because it encounters various adverse factors and obstacles.

It also encounters the formidable obstacles of your mind's refusal to give way to higher principles in preference to lesser principles. This is because the mind sometimes has its own attachments, whims and fancies, and it has fallen in love with certain lesser ways of expressing itself. It clings to them; it does not want to leave them.

There is an essential unwillingness of the mind to change, sometimes obstinacy, sometimes even obduracy. Therefore, great wisdom, earnestness and sincere application are necessary in order to bring the mind around, recreate it and to cultivate in ourselves a new mind. It is a regeneration. Gurudev used a significant phrase n one song: "Die to live." The old has to die and give place to the new in your interior. It is in dying to the little self that one attains to everlasting life.

It is a very difficult task. You can suppress the mind. You can repress it. You can keep it in check. But to make it die, so that t forever leaves off its old inveterate tendencies and consents to ecome totally new, that is a very difficult task. For the mind is lways propelled by a basic delusion, a basic ignorance. A Hindi *hajan* contains the line : "Man mari, maya na mari–I thought I ad killed my mind, but I had not yet killed my delusion, my *maya*, ny spiritual ignorance. Therefore I found that the mind is still there. appeared to be dead, but it is still there, because it is propelled rom my inside by this great illusory and delusory force."

In his song of "Eighteen Ities," Gurudev says "Brahman is e only real entity," and follows it immediately by saying "Mr. so nd so is a false non-entity." As long as one does not overcome the eluded notion that "I am important, I am somthing, I am someone," nless you realise and become convinced that Mr. So and So, your " within, your little personality consciousness, your distinctive ego-onsciousness, is a false non-entity, then it is very difficult to really art living the divine life.

For we still cling to that within us which is not the Divine, hich is the outcome of *bhranti* (error), the outcome of *avidya,* of

ajnana. Dehatma buddhi (considering the body as the Atma gives rise to this false ego-principle of a distinctive, separat individual human personality consciousness. It is the *adhya* (superimposition), the proximity of the *suddha chaitanya tatt* (pure consciousness principle) which is your *nija svarupa* (ov true nature) with the *jada tattva* (insentient principle) that goes make up your *prakriti* that is your earthly self.

It is this proximity that has given rise to this ego-princi which is, at the moment, the most important thing in the whole wo Even though it is a nothing, even though it constitutes your bonda your essential darkness, your Prapancha and Samsara, your great problem and affliction, yet such is the tremendous power of *m* that she makes you regard it as the most important thing to treasured and supported, to be carefully preserved and nurtu From morning till evening we are doing nothing but taking car it, trying to see that it is not in any way assailed or hurt. We everything to keep it permanently there, whereas we should clearly that it is our greatest problem. It indeed constitutes our problem, the central problem of our spiritual life.

And if you psychologically investigate ego-consciousn analyse it, pursue it and begin to find out, then psychologically a you will find it to be the kingpin of all troubles, the clashes conflicts, the fights and quarrels, the bitterness and hatreds. then, one does not wish to do this keen critical analysis of o inner personality structure. For the ego is the essence of it. It is prop of the personality. It is the ridge-pole of this life. And if ridge-pole is taken away, the whole tent will collapse. There wi nowhere for you to reside.

So, therefore, it is always maintained. Great importan given to it. Yet it is our affliction. *Ahamkriti* (egoism) is our *b* (hindrance). It is our *bhavaroga* (disease of transmigration wordly existence). It is the main affliction from which we suffering. But we do not know that it is the source of our suffe

We think that it will protect us from all suffering. We rely upon it. We depend upon it to maintain our integrity.

Everyone knows the great adage : "Then shall I be free, when I shall cease to be," but we do not recognise its truth, its validity and its importance. We do not recognise its worth in our life, its central place in our sadhana. So we know everything, yet we live in ignorance. We have all the knowledge, yet we cling to ignorance. That is why we weep and wail, we fight and quarrel. We bring upon ourselves various types of afflictions, frustrations, disappointments, disillusionments, sorrows and griefs, not knowing that the key is simple. We can rise above all of them if we refuse to give importance to this ego-consciousness, this "so and so" false non-entity and become established in the truth of our being.

Yet, even though this is said a hundred times, we fail to recognise this truth. That is why Lord Krishna says : *"daivi hyesha gunamayi mama maya duratyaya* (verily, this divine illusion of Mine, made up of the three qualities of nature, is difficult to cross over)." Difficult it is to understand, for it is so subtle, so elusive, so effective, that knowing, yet one does not know. One lives in ignorance. Seeing, yet one does not perceive. One still remains blind. Hearing, yet one does not really understand. One pays no attention to what one hears. Therefore, even though hearing, one still fails to understand what is being said.

This is the subtle workings of *maya*, which wants to preserve this personality which deserves to be liquidated and not preserved. Yet its preservation is the most important business of life for the vast number of individuals that go to make up human society.

Fortunate indeed are the microscopic few who clearly recognise that our main problem is ourselves, that our *prapancha* lies within us, our *samsara* lies within us. our bondage lies within us, not outside. Others are not our problem. We are more our problem than all others put together. This indeed is to be pondered,

to be grasped, to be understood and known, and this indeed has to be dealt with one day or another, if you are to transcend yourself and attain your true status, your divine identity. One day it has to be done. Until that time, we shall still be carefully nourishing and preserving our problems, we shall be carefully perpetuating our bondage and protecting our troubles.

Think deeply, if you are capable of doing so. Cursory reflection will not take you into that which alone can make you realise the truth of the reality. It is only deep thinking that will bring you face to face with this central truth of your present situation, that you are presently established in a limited, separate human consciousness, a "so and so" consciousness, a "such and such" consciousness. Deep reflection will be necessary to realise the actual nature of your present consciousness, deep and constant reflection.

Therefore, we invoke the grace of the Divine and the benedictions of holy beings like Holy Master, to enable us to become well aware of the state of our inner consciousness. To enable us to deal with the situation the way it is, and become established in our true self, to rise and go beyond our lesser self and to make our ground a dimension of our true Self, our divinity.

Then alone divine life starts. Then alone divine life is possible. Otherwise, *maya* deludes us into thinking that we have already lifted our consciousness into a higher plane, while keeping us firmly established in our plane of the I-consciousness. So it is difficult to understand the very subtle workings of *Maya* unless we are constantly after Her with in-depth thinking, reflection and reasoning. Therefore they say, you must have keen, actively-exercised discrimination as your constant companion *day* by day. Great is the need to supplement our devotion with keen, analytical, critical reasoning. *bhakti, jnana* and *vairagya*-all three have to go together.

We are approaching the birth anniversary of one of the greatest spiritual personlities of India, who had within himself an abundant measure of *bhakti* and *jnana* as well as *vairagya*. So

his name has become immortal. Sri Krishna Chaitanya Gauranga Mahaprabhu was supreme devotee of the highest state of *bhakti.* But at the same time, he was a very strictly rational, logical and keenly analytical personality. And due to the combination of these two, he became established in the highest type of *vairagya, supreme vairagya*. If you study his life, you will be astounded to see in his personality a rare confluence of the highest *bhakti,* highest *jnana* and highest *vairagya.*

He, who lived more than 500 years ago and is the inspirer of the Hare Krishna movement, the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya (sect), is indeed a great ideal. He perfectly realised the falsity and nothingness of his little ego-consciousness and at one stroke was able to cast away all ambition and all his love for learning and rationality. He had been an outstanding scholar and a towering intellect. But due to his great insight and great spiritual awakening within, he was able to put away his ambition and scholarship and conquer the ego–a very difficult task indeed. If you have conquered the ego, you have conquered *samsara,* you have conquered *prapancha*, you have overcome bondage, you have liberated yourself.

"Then shall I be free when I shall cease to be." This "I" which is so dear to everyone, which is the most important thing in the whole world for everyone, which one does not want to let go of, it is this that really constitutes your problem and it creates problems for others also.

And it is to solve this problem that all philosophies have come up. All the great acharyas, Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vallabhacharya, Nimbarkacharya etc., all the great teachers, Guru Nanak, Zoroaster, Jesus, Buddha, have laboured only in order to teach us, to enable us to overcome this little "I". It is inveterate and very difficult indeed to recognise in its true colours. All the philosophies exist only in order to debunk this "I". All systems and schools of philosophy exist to make us see this truth clearly,

that "I" is your real problem. It is not an easy jokē. You have to become a real philosopher, you have to become a real Yogi, you have to become a real *vairagi*, you have to become a real *viveki*, in order to recognise this subtlest of all subtle truths.

God bless you. God's grace is necessary. Guru's *kripa* is necessary and our willingness to face facts is necessary. Our willingness to recognise the truth when we see it, is necessary. It is the third important necessity. May you be endowed with all three!



The Integral Method of Philosophy

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

Swami Sivananda's comprehensive method combines revelation, meditation and reason in one. To him, all methods of sense-function and the mental approach to Truth have to be set aside as finally faulty for the reason that their deliverances are untrustworthy, being logically indefensible and psychologically warped by the defects of the instruments. Infallible knowledge is to be had only in the intuition of Reality, and all knowledge derived through the senses, understanding and reason falls short of it in an enormous degree. No other method of approach to Truth than communion with being as such can give us ultimately reliable knowledge. Unless the knower and the known are identified in knowledge, knowledge is not true, but gives us only a semblance of what we really seek to obtain. Swami Sivananda is a faithful follower of Sankara in his basic presuppositions, though he is equally friendly with Ramanuja, Madhva and the other dualistic and pluralistic philosophers. To Swami Sivananda, philosophy is the way of the attainment of Brahman, and his method includes all that is best in every school of philosophy. Empiricism, rationalism, transcendentalism and absolutism come to a loving embrace in his most catholic system. The experience of the nature of the individual in relation to the universe, of which it is a content, becomes the basis of philosophical enquiry, which culminates in spiritual meditation and realisation. *Sruti, Yukti* and *Anubhava*–authority, reason and intuition–are the stages of the ascent of the soul aspiring for eternal life. *Sravana, Manana* and *Nididhyasana*–hearing (or study), reflection and meditation sum up the practical method of the spiritual aspirant. Hearing and reflection comprise the entire gamut of speculative philosophy, and meditation is the final fruition leading to *Sakshatkara*, or realisation. Aspiration for the Eternal is the greatest incentive to philosophical enquiry, whose aim is not only to know, but to be.

Human knowledge, for Swami Sivananda, is not an exact representation of Reality, nor is the world a mere projection of the human mind. The world is the objective appearance of the Absolute,

thus being ideal, but is also the cause of the representation of the same in human knowledge, thus being real. The world is ideal as contained in the Absolute, real as being outside the finite minds. The variety observed in sensations should prove that there is a variety in objects which cannot themselves be sensations. Philosophic techniques rise first from the establishment of the self as the source of knowledge. Philosophy should proceed with equipments that bear relation to the self primarily, for bereft of a knowledge of this unavoidable relation, any enterprise in this direction is bound to be wild-goose chase. There is a fundamental correlatively of all things as values converging on the Self, which is unmistakably the unchanging centre of all experience.

How are we to be sure whether a method that we employ to achieve a certain end is valid or not ? Perhaps, in ordinary life, this will be vouched for by the possibility at least of a hope of accomplishing the purpose in view. But we sift well the material on our hands and judge the strength and usefulness of it before we actually use it. A thorough knowledge of the correctness and the satisfactory character of the method has always to precede the employment of the same for the chosen purpose. We should not make assertions or take active steps without first ascertaining the powers of the instruments of knowledge and action. "We must understand what knowing is, in order to explain anything at all, so that any proposed explanation of knowing would necessarily presuppose that we understood what knowing is," purports to be the great dictum of Kant, the renowned epistemologist. The Atman, which cannot be gainsaid and which is the presupposition of experience, is the pivot of philosophical disquisitions. We have, in the mystical method of intellectual and moral purification advocated by Plotinus, a parallel to this comprehensive method in philosophy.

The central aim of the philosophy of Swami Sivananda is the living of the highest life, a life fixed in the knowledge of the principles which are the ultimate regulators of all things. An enlightened life of peace and joy is the goal of his sublime philosophy. And this blessedness can be attained only in the Divine Being. *Dharma*, the ethical value; *Artha*, the material value; and *Kama*, the vital value, are all based on

Moksha which is the supreme value of existence. The aim of life is the attainment of Moksha. Swami Sivananda's system is a specimen of a type of philosophy that arises on account of a necessity felt by all in life, and not because of any curiosity characteristic of thinkers who have only a speculative interest and no practical aspiration. The sight of evil and suffering, pain and death, directs one's vision to the causes of these phenomena; and this, in its turn, necessitates an enquiry into the reality behind life as a whole. It is not an academic interest in theoretical pursuits, but a practical, irresistible urge to contact Reality that leads to the glorious enterprise of true philosophy. Philosophy, in India, does not pretend to provide one with any new knowledge which was not existent before, but elaborately expounds the structure of the eternal knowledge which is handed down by the ancient sages through several generations. Swami Sivananda is a link in the long chain of seers who have imparted their spiritual wisdom to mankind through precept as well as by practice. His philosophy is one of a series of intense meditations meant to lead seekers to an ineffable spiritual experience, an experience which is not sensory or intellectual, but timeless.

Swami Sivananda teaches that the bondage of man consists in his ignorance of the true nature of his self and that his freedom is in the knowledge of the Self. By bondage he means subjection to the process of birth and death and the consequent experience of suffering and pain. Self-knowledge can be attained even in this very life, provided one puts forth sufficient effort towards this end. True happiness can be had only in the Self, and it is futile to search for it in this temporal world, which does not partake of the nature of Reality. The knowledge that man has to strive for is not a theoretical understanding but is the consciousness of the Self. It is neither information gathered regarding the self, nor a mere acquaintance with it through discursive reason, that can liberate man from his bondage. What is required is practical realisation, which is possible only through profound meditation on the nature of Brahman. This meditation, again, is impossible without strict self-discipline and self-restraint. As Brahman is the sole reality, the means of its realisation should necessarily consist in a conscious abandonment of desires for

objects that exist as the non-self and that create an apparent division between consciousness and its contents. Philosophy, to Swami Sivananda, is the living of a life of deep insight and an intense austerity consequent upon it, whose final aim is to secure the bliss of Brahman, in one's own self, which is to be realised as the being indentical with Brahman, and the rendering of help to humanity for reaching this glorious consummation of life by teaching and personal example. It is not a philosophy confined to the schools, but is a study of the technique of wise living by grounding oneself in the consciousness of the Self. It is, in other words, learning to manifest the law of the Eternal in the temporal life of the world, to bring a reconciliation between the Absolute and the relative, to move on the earth as a human being, while, at the same time, being unceasingly alive to the presence of the super-mundane Absolute.

The philosophy of Swami Sivananda is not any secret way capable of being trodden only by a select few. It is an all-inclusive method which comprises all existent means of communion with Reality. It is, really, the Vedanta applied to all aspects of life in order to live one's life at its highest and best. It is the system of the perfect life, the rule of wisdom and the law of liberty. It is not a speculative system reserved for intellectual pleasantry during leisure hours, but the food of the higher understanding and the light of the innermost self of man. The vedanta is as simple as life is; and it is also as complex as life is.

Every citizen of the world can be taught this philosophy, provided the teacher knows well what it truly means and how it can be applied in practice to the different stages of life and to different individuals. It is ignorance and wrong understanding that make certain people think that the philosophy of the Atman or Brahman is an other-worldly theory concerning only a life which follows death. The vedanta is not any narrow dogma divorced from the facts of everyday life. It can and ought to be applied in the daily life of everyone. Without it life would be a perpetual groping in darkness. What is man, if not a thought, a feeling, or a group of thoughts and feelings? And the Vedanta is the light that illumines the world of thought, of feeling, of willing, of understanding. It

is the life of the thoughtful, the joy of the learned, the destination of the pilgrim soul on the arduous path of knowledge. It is the final explanation of the Yoga of action, of devotion, of concentration, of wisdom and of every conceivable religious, philosophy or mystic methodology.

The Vedanta of Swami Sivananda does not teach that one should detest the world or isolate oneself in some world other than this. It does not proclaim that anyone should forsake his duties in life or put on a grave face or behave in any conspicuous manner. His Vedanta declares that one should not be selfish or attached to any fleeting object, that one should live in the consciousness of the loving brotherhood of creation and the unity of the self of the universe, that the truth of existence is one and indivisible, that division or separation, hatred, enmity, quarrel and selfishness are against the nature of the Self, that the pain of birth and death is caused by desire generated by ignorance of the Self, that the highest state of experience is immortal life or the realisation of Brahman, that everyone is born for this supreme purpose, that this is the highest duty of man, that all other duties are only aids or auxiliaries to this paramount duty, that one should perform one's prescribed duties with the spirit of non-attachment and the dedication of oneself and one's actions to the Supreme Being, that every aspect of one's life should get consummated in this Consciousness. The question is not of abandoning something or holding on to something, but of a change in the Drishti, or the vision of life. It is a reorientation in the way of the functioning of the volitional, the conceptual and the perceptual consciousness that is required by the philosophic life. The body will be there; its activities will be there; but these will be transformed into the lustrous gold of the liberated life of Jivanmukti, by the touch of the philosopher's stone of the knowledge of the self. The life of Self-knowledge is life in its splendid perfection and plenitude. This is the blessed gnosis, the state of freedom or Moksha. The way to such realisation is Vedanta Sadhana. It commences with the analysis and study of the nature of the Atman, and comprises the inner techniques and processes of Yoga, Bhakti and Karma, in their large, universal connotation.



Importance Of Ethical Culture

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

Right from the beginning of your spiritual life, you must understand clearly, that in true humility, sincere desire to gradually root out pride, egoism and jealousy, earnest and unceasing introspection to find out your own defects and improve yourself, lies your hope for progress . Without this basis, all sorts of spiritual practices will become a delusion and a waste. The aspirant gets puffed up, more proud and egoistic. When this happens, all good advice and instructions fall flat upon him. Higher influences cease to have any effect as the aspirant becomes deliberately and obstinately non-receptive to them. Eternal vigiliance should be exercised to avoid falling into this dangerous state. Always feel that you are only a beginner and strive diligently to acquire the primary virtues of kindness, humility, softness of speech, charitability, forbearance and self-denial., Then alone does the hardened heart become soft and good sentiments and spiritual emotions arise in it. To achieve success in any measure in the spiritual path is the most difficult and uphill task. It is truly Divine Grace alone that can raise the aspirant from darkness to light. So vehement and self assertive and rebellious is the egoistic self of man that it refuses to be changed from its vicious state to state of virtue, goodness and saintliness. The eradication of egoism in all its numerous aggressive forms comprises the very core of spirituality and all spiritual Sadhana.

Concentration, meditation and Samadhi (God-consciousness) are still far from him who has not purified himself and got rid of his evil traits. The greatest harm is done by the fact that even while in this unregenerate state the aspirant becomes deluded into thinking that he has already progressed considerably in spirituality. He deceives himself with the thought that as far as he is concerned he is pretty advanced in spiritual practices. All sense of sane judgment, discrimination and introspection vanishes from him. Under this grave delusion he allows himself to be unrestrained and runs wild, intolerant of criticism, resentful of the least opposition utterly disregardful of

the feelings of others and absolutely unamenable to advice and correction.

O aspirants! Beware of these dangers in your spiritual life. Be vigilant always. Without the eager and earnest desire to improve oneself, without service, humility, sincerity, simplicity and eagerness to learn and improve oneself, all spiritual practices are useless like rowing a boat which is firmly anchored to the river-bed or like sowing seeds upon a rock.

Remember this point well. Meditate upon this. Know what true spirituality is . Fully realise the importance of becoming a changed man ethically and morally before claiming to be an aspirant. Pray for His Grace. When your nature is changed, purified and prepared, Grace will flow down itself in the firmament of your pure heart. Bliss will spontaneously flow in and fill you when you have emptied yourself of all harshness, egoism, pride and passion. Perfection and immortality will be yours . Where there is kindness, humility and purity, there spirituality springs up, saintliness shines, divinity descends and perfection manifests itself.

Your character, your future is built by your thoughts and deeds. As you think, so shall you become. If you think nobly, you will be born with a noble character. If you think badly, you will be born with a bad character. This is the immutable law of nature. Change your mode of thought and mental attitude from this very minute. Develop right thinking. Have pure desires. Do good actions. Entertain sublime, divine thoughts and build your character. Have one pure, holy desire for liberation from the wheel of birth and death. Root out hatred. Radiate love and compassion. True selfless love is the greatest redeeming and unifying force in the universe. See and feel the presence of the Supreme Self in all beings and things.

Ethics is the science of conduct. Ethics is the study of what is right or good in conduct. Ethical science shows the way in which human beings behave towards each other as well as towards other creatures. Without ethics you connot have any progress in the spiritual

path. Ethics is the foundation of all Yogic practices , the corner-stone of Vedanta and the strong pillar on which the edifice of Bhakti Yoga stands.

Ethics is a Morality. Morality is the gateway to the realisation of God. It is the master-key of religion. He who leads a moral or virtuous life attains freedom, perfection or Moksha.

Ethics is relative science. What is good for one man may not be good for another. What is good at one time may not be good at another time and at another place. Ethics is relative to the man himself and to his surroundings.

The primary truth of every religion is the foundation of ethics or morality or the science of right conduct. Yama and Niyama of Patanjali Maharshi in the Raja Yoga Philosophy constitute the best ethics for a Yoga practitioner. The Manu Smriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti—all explain the code of right conduct. The Noble Eightfold Path of Lord Buddha is the essence of ethical teachings. The Ten Commandments of Judaism and the Sermon on the Mound of Lord Jesus contain the ethical teachings for the uplift of humanity.

Practice of ethics will help you to live harmony with your neighbours, friends , your own family members, fellow-beings and all other people. It will confer on you lasting happiness and Moksha. Your heart will be purified. It will keep your conscience ever clean. A moral man who follows strictly the principles of ethics will not deviate even a fraction of an inch from the path of Dharma or righteousness. He earns undying reputation for his practice of ethics. He becomes an embodiment of Dharma. He only leaves his physical body, but his name lives as long as the world lasts.

Ahimsa , Satya, Brahmacharya—these are the very foundation of ethics, Yoga and Vedanta. The practice of these virtues is a great universal vow for the whole of mankind. The practice of the cardinal virtues purifies the heart and steadies the mind and prepares the aspirant for the reception of the transcendental light.

Dharma is rooted in these virtues. All enmities and hatred cease in the presence of one who is established in Ahimsa. Brahman or the Eternal is Truth itself. It can be realised only by adhering to truth. Brahaman is Purity itself . It can be realised only by practising purity.

Abstaining from injury in thoughts, word and deed, mercy to all creatures, gifts , control of anger, freedom from pride and malice, restraint of the senses constitute praiseworthy behaviour. The act or exertion which does not do good to others, or that act for which one has to feel shame should not be done. That act, on the other hand, should be done for which one may be lauded in society. This is a brief description of what right conduct is.

It is the motive that counts in the performance of an action. If an action is performed with a selfish motive it binds a man to the wheel of births and deaths. If it is done with a pure motive in a disinterested manner, it will purify the heart and lead one to the attainment of the final emancipation. Right and wrong can be determined not by the objective consequences but by the nature of the subjective intention of the agent. God looks to the motive of the doer. Lord Krishna says: "Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, always content, nowhere seeking refuge , he is not doing anything although doing actions." Before you perform any action scrutinise your motives. If there is selfishness give up that action. It takes sometime to purify the motives.

Your heart is harder than flint or steel, as it has been the repository for the demoniacal qualities such as greed, miserliness, harshness, rudeness, anger and pride. It is your foremost duty to soften it. You have made your heart crooked and narrow through hypocrisy, untruth and back-biting. It is your onerous duty to expand it now. You have rendered your heart impure through just. You must purify it now. Only by the development of virtues can you purify your heart, expand it and soften it. If you injure any other creature you really injure yourself, because the whole world is

nothing but your own self. This is Hindu ethics. To stick to right conduct is difficult, no doubt. Mockery, persecution misunderstanding and other difficulties have to be faced. Therefore the cultivation of forgiveness, calm endurance, meekness of spirit and forbearance are of great importance. Uphold virtue at any cost and for its sake bear any calumny. Return good for evil.



Know Thyself

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

If, for a moment, we cast our eyes upon the vibrant and dynamic life upon the surface of the globe today, we see that tremendous scientific advancements have been made in the past couple of centuries. Man has progressed, tapped new resources, discovered more about things, far and near, than ever was known before. By his ingenuity and scientific acumen, man has evolved such instruments that things which otherwise could not have been perceived are now laid before the gaze of the human eye,— almost invisible phenomena and cosmic phenomena alike are revealed. Such great and staggering achievements have been made in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, botany, zoology, electricity, astronomy, mechanics, electronics, etc., and so much greater is the control that man holds over external forces, that life is now replete with innumerable comforts and conveniences for his enjoyments. Such rapid progress in the field of science has been made that, even a century ago one might have thought of it as an impossibility, a fantastic dream or a sheer fancy. But it has, nevertheless, become a fact.

At a second glance, however, when we observe mankind itself, we see vast masses of people in different parts of the globe with an improved material lot, but without a corresponding improvement or increased satisfaction and happiness in the life of the inner being which ought to have been the result of this progress in the external sciences. If a man is to truly improve and advance, he must do so on all levels and in all spheres of life and activity. There is no doubt that efficiency has been raised and organisation has been widened. But why is increased happiness in the life of the individual not very apparent ? There are strange imbalances existing between groups which enjoy great prosperity and those groups which suffer abject poverty. Even in the life of the average man, there may be prosperity but together with sorrow, convenience together with discontentment, both at the same time ! Man's possessions have been increased,

but his joy, his essential joy of living, has not been clearly increased. No one could honestly say : 'Yes, I think that all these material improvements have put us into a state of perennial joy and unalloyed happiness'. Even real progress in the physical welfare of human beings is dubious : the number of hospitals has increased beyond compare; doctors, medicines, chemical factories, the manufacture of drugs and various methods of surgery have increased tenfold ; while, side by side, diseases have multiplied considerably. The farther mankind progresses in science the more prevalent become the new kinds of diseases and sufferings which afflict man on earth. Could there be any specific reason for this ? There is a simple reason.

Man is, ultimately, the most important unit in this universe. With this most important unit, however, not everything is all right. While advance is being made in all the fields of external nature, man's own nature is being very much neglected. The mistake lies in that we cultivate the head and neglect the heart, and this seems to lead us to downfall. Man has to understand himself. It is in the knowledge of oneself that the laws that govern life are discovered and the factors that determine human behaviour are revealed. With the knowledge of the forces within, one learns to apply the laws that govern these forces and thus properly to direct one's behaviour. If this essential knowledge is not made the object of one's serious study and seeking, if the basic knowledge of oneself is over looked, then not all the knowledge of external things, no matter how vast or impressive this knowledge may be, can bring about a real state of progress in man's world.

It may be stated that, at present, there is a total eclipse of the knowledge of the self, and natural result is the insufficiency and inadequacy in human knowledge, together with basic degeneracy in human nature. Power makes the human being selfish ego-centred and greedy. The phenomenon of power-grabbing is so commonly seen in all the different parts of the globe. The trend seems to be that each confined community is for protecting its own interests, wishing to acquire all knowledge and power for itself and is,

therefore, opposing itself to all the rest of humanity. Also it is afflicted with a dangerous urge to make use of the power thus acquired for the destruction of all those except the few with whom it identifies itself. This seems to be the picture of the precarious state of affairs at this turn of our century. We see that real progress has been vitiated and perverted due to lack of refinement in the nature of the human being. If, as man had progressed in controlling external nature, he had also gained knowledge of his inner nature, if he had improved the quality of his being by increasing its capacity for compassion, its capacity for self-sacrifice, and if such progress as these had kept pace with the progress arising out of his mastery over external forces, then the whole picture would be of balance and well-being in all the communities of the world.

The imbalance between outward advancement made by human society and the basic degeneracy undergone by the human individual is the root-cause of the unhappy state in which humanity finds itself today, fraught with fear, uncertainty and with a sense of insecurity. Notwithstanding the fact that so much knowledge of the external world has been acquired and so much power has been obtained during the past century, the question is : 'Why is there such a deep feeling in all human hearts that this is hardly a period worth living?' People do not want to think of the present. Either they project themselves into a future Utopia when man has, perhaps, solved all his present problems, or they think wistfully of the past when things seem to have been better. This is due to a basic error the entire power of man's mind, his perceptions and his senses have totally been externalised. He has not tried to start from the proper starting point, viz., his own nature, knowledge of himself. If man does not know himself, how can his life be lived successfully ?

The knowledge of oneself is the required knowledge. And the education in this knowledge has to be started right from childhood. It is only when the art of right thinking is initiated in childhood that true growth or progress ensues in the life of the individual. We have, first of all, to understand what we are and what are those

factors that are inherent in our true personality that will increase its beauty of character, and what are those factors that mar the beauty of character. How many people take time to think about themselves? Throughout our lives we think about our engagements, our week-end plans, our silly pleasures and avocations. We think about the type of dress we shall have, what new model of car we shall buy next, what type of house-painting we shall afford, and so forth. At every moment things which are outside of ourselves occupy our attention. Who spends half an hour every day in calmness and silence ? Who asks : 'Who am I? How did I come here? What is the world in which I am living, where a little while ago I was not, and a little while from now I will not be? what is the real connection between me and this universe, between me and these people around me, with whom I have a temporary relationship ? And what is my real duty in this ever changing set-up?' These questions we do not take time to ponder over. Unless and until we find answer to them and obtain the essential knowledge of what we really are, whence we came and whither we go, effective and purposeful living will lie far off in the future for us, and we would have lived in vain. These have ever been the central questions of the saints and sages of the past and the present who have tried to bring about an awakening in man so that this earth-life might properly be used to get an essential knowledge of the Self, the true Being.

We have seen that everyone says 'I' and 'I am', and thus far everyone is perfectly all right, but then, from the second word onwards man voices his ignorance! He proceeds with 'I am an Indian', 'I am an American', 'I am a French' or a 'British', 'I am a Republican or Democrat' and so on. Whatever he adds to 'I am' immediately limits his consciousness. When you say, 'I am so-and-so', you separate and create a barrier between yourself and every human being in any respect contrary to you. You immediately cut yourself off from the rest of the world. Herein lies the colossal ignorance. Here it is that you have to make use of your intellect properly. If your intellect and understanding are entangled in the

lower nature, if they are thus deprived of their freedom, then the pure consciousness of 'I am'- ness becomes vitiated. The feeling of universal oneness with all life is lost. Again, 'I am'-ness makes you feel at one with the entire universe, but saying 'I am a human being' at once begins circumscribing yourself into a particular species,—the human species. You feel 'I am not that creature'. You say, 'kick that dog', 'kill that rat'. 'crush that bug', etc., and thus you separate yourself from all other species. It means that you are in the process of stifling your spirit and choking up the universality of your true being, your pure consciousness. That is virtual death. Confining your spirit into smaller and smaller rings is trying to choke the fount of life. This Fount overflows and pervades the entire universe, and in the process of confining yourself into narrow channels, you are withholding that fluent inner expression of peace, by thwarting its natural and spontaneous outflow.

Remember, you are Consciousness or Awareness. You are not inert or insentient, and since you know that you exit, there is knowledge in you, which is a part of your essential nature. You are in truth Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. When you know that you are Existence-Consciousness and also simultaneously when you know that you are not that which is constantly agitating you, then you become totally devoid of all the defects of the lower perishable aspects of your being. All pain, grief, suffering, etc., is for the body; to experience grief, delusion, jealousy, desire, etc., is the fate of the mind; and when you know yourself as independent of the body, mind and intellect, then how can you allow these facts that characterise the lower aspects of your being to affect you? You are in truth, without pain, without suffering, without sorrow, without delusion, in short without any blemish whatsoever. Your true nature is Bliss, This 'I am' is devoid of and distinct from all the blemishes and defects of the body-mind part of your being. Know thyself as such, and the true nature of the individual is verily such. This knowledge is your greatest wealth, and this is what you have to unfold, the true aim of life. This truth of your being should be the

one subject upon which you ponder and reflect, meditate and realise. If you succeed in realising that, your whole life blossoms forth into a radiance of Love, Peace and Bliss.

Let us all sincerely strive to the best of our ability every day, beginning from the New Year, to make it a point of being conscious of what we really are and make ourselves God-centred. May you become one with the Existence Principle which is even in a blade of grass, a speck of dust, a wisp of cloud and in every mode of expression of life. Thus feeling one with all, how could you hurt others? How could you bring yourself to be false or cruel ? How could you bring yourself to deceive others or play them false ? How could you bring yourself to rage or to be angry ? This is the view and the vision that man, not only as an individual but also as entire humanity, needs today. When professor Einstein was once asked in a certain interview : 'What shall we do, Professor, in order to improve the world?' he replied, 'We must have improved people.' That means we must live in the consciousness of our true nature. Even if a few handful make it their firm resolution, their greatest aim and aspiration in life, not to live any longer as creatures but to feel themselves divine, to be always at one with the Divine Essence, then real progress will have been made. Let our resolution be this during the New Year day.

May the New Year bring in prosperity, plenty, joy and enlightenment throughout the world! May there be peace in the whole world! May God bless all beings!



Path to Perfection

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

The attempt to achieve perfection begins with the consciousness and application of the immediate reality that is presented to the senses. That which is definitely known to be existent in the normal human state of consciousness is the body situated in a word of plurality. The maintenance of the body in harmony and of the proper relation of the body with the external world is the first empirical concern of man. It should be the duty of a seeker of perfection to be careful to see that the body is not out of its balance in any way, at any time. The health of the body is of great importance in one's endeavour to utilise one's power in the quest of truth. External purity and observance of the laws of hygiene are not to be neglected if the body is to be maintained as one's friend and helper. Saucha is the basic rule of sound health. This must include the system of partaking of diet of a suitable quality, in a suitable quantity, at a suitable place and suitable time. Mental health and physical health are, generally, interdependent.

The practice of the moral law and ethical conduct will pave the way to the maintenance of a sound mind in a sound body. Passions and disturbing emotions disbalance the system and ruin the health of a person. A mental disturbance means the irrhythmic distribution of the vital energy and the disturbance of the nerves. This leads to the illness of the body. A good aspiration towards a non-selfish end is the prerequisite of a good programme of life. The early stages of one's life should be spent in the pursuit of knowledge, service of the teacher, self-control and austerity. At this stage one should not concern oneself with the duty and the business of the world, which are likely to draw one's attention away from the primary duties which one is expected to fulfil at this time. The moral law which includes the canons of truthfulness, love and continence should become the guiding factor in the expression of one's thought, word and deed. Contentment, joy and devotion to the ideal of one's life bring about the health of the mind as well as

of the body. One's ideal of life should be that which never perishes in time and is never contradicted by anything else. To know what this ideal is one requires the aid of an able teacher.

When one undergoes the process of education, no other factor in life should interrupt or interfere with this process. The process of education should be such that it includes in a balanced way all the sides and layers of the human nature,- physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Physical health, intellectual understanding, moral integrity and spiritual wisdom are what lead to the ultimate perfection. The different intellectual sciences which are taught in the universities of today are a feeble apology for the integral education that is necessary for the attainment of perfection. No education which neglects certain important aspects of human life can be complete and worth its name. A well adjusted and balanced study of the essential human nature should constitute real education. After one is well educated, one must direct one's consciousness and intelligence to the analysis of experience and knowledge of truth. Understanding, willing and feeling are the three faculties in man which have to be taken as the means to the practice of the method of approach to the truth. Some make use of all these faculties in a certain proportion in their march to perfection. Others take to an exclusive method which transforms the other methods into itself, or retain them as subservient elements.

The method of feeling is faith. Faith in God is the standard way, for some, of reaching perfection. Love of God and service of God through His manifestation as the universe is the principal path. Faith does not question and reason, but accepts the testimony of the teachers and the scriptures in believing that the omnipresent God is the one Reality of the universe. This acceptance of the cosmic presence of a spiritual Being as the supreme Lord of the universe implies an attitude of reverence and love on the part of the devotee towards such Being. The human emotions are not destroyed here but are turned towards God and thus sublimated, God is loved as a father, a mother, a son, a friend, a husband or a master. The world

becomes a pointer to God, and worldly love an indication of the presence of God-love. The world is the body of God. Nothing is to be ultimately rejected. Everything is to be loved as a step to God-realisation.

The path of the will is the austere method of determination and decision in regard to the way and the goal. The will bases itself either on faith or on understanding. Will based on faith is different from will based on understanding, and the two wills constitute two different paths to perfection. The will that is based on faith concentrates itself on the Supreme Being which is accepted as an act of faith. As God is everywhere and the mind of man is characteristic of a behaviour which is contrary to the fullness of God, the mind should be checked and its modifications completely transformed in a higher Being. contrary modifications are opposed with their contradictories or replaced by others of a more beneficial nature, or the modifications of the mind are fixed on God and given a transcendental touch of the philosopher-stone of the infinitude of experience. Matter is separated from Spirit through contemplation on the essential distinction between the two and on the independence and absoluteness of the Spirit. The power of the will is such that it either completely excludes from consciousness all forms pretending to exist outside the Infinite or absorbs them into the consciousness of the Infinite. Thus the will is a way to perfection.

The path of the understanding is the rational method of investigation of experience. Here the understanding and the will become one and the will becomes another name for the movement of the force of the understanding. The experience of one's finitude implies the existence of the Infinite. The nature of the Infinite is opposed to that of the individual. God is accepted not merely because the scriptures have made mention of Him or because the teachers believe in Him, but because one's own experience and understanding become self-contradictory in their expressions when the Intelligent Infinite is not accepted, and also because the infinite consciousness comes to be the logical deduction of the inmost experience of the

of the body. One's ideal of life should be that which never perishes in time and is never contradicted by anything else. To know what this ideal is one requires the aid of an able teacher.

When one undergoes the process of education, no other factor in life should interrupt or interfere with this process. The process of education should be such that it includes in a balanced way all the sides and layers of the human nature,- physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Physical health, intellectual understanding, moral integrity and spiritual wisdom are what lead to the ultimate perfection. The different intellectual sciences which are taught in the universities of today are a feeble apology for the integral education that is necessary for the attainment of perfection. No education which neglects certain important aspects of human life can be complete and worth its name. A well adjusted and balanced study of the essential human nature should constitute real education. After one is well educated, one must direct one's consciousness and intelligence to the analysis of experience and knowledge of truth. Understanding, willing and feeling are the three faculties in man which have to be taken as the means to the practice of the method of approach to the truth. Some make use of all these faculties in a certain proportion in their march to perfection. Others take to an exclusive method which transforms the other methods into itself, or retain them as subservient elements.

The method of feeling is faith. Faith in God is the standard way, for some, of reaching perfection. Love of God and service of God through His manifestation as the universe is the principal path. Faith does not question and reason, but accepts the testimony of the teachers and the scriptures in believing that the omnipresent God is the one Reality of the universe. This acceptance of the cosmic presence of a spiritual Being as the supreme Lord of the universe implies an attitude of reverence and love on the part of the devotee towards such Being. The human emotions are not destroyed here but are turned towards God and thus sublimated, God is loved as a father, a mother, a son, a friend, a husband or a master. The world

becomes a pointer to God, and worldly love an indication of the presence of God-love. The world is the body of God. Nothing is to be ultimately rejected. Everything is to be loved as a step to God-realisation.

The path of the will is the austere method of determination and decision in regard to the way and the goal. The will bases itself either on faith or on understanding. Will based on faith is different from will based on understanding, and the two wills constitute two different paths to perfection. The will that is based on faith concentrates itself on the Supreme Being which is accepted as an act of faith. As God is everywhere and the mind of man is characteristic of a behaviour which is contrary to the fullness of God, the mind should be checked and its modifications completely transformed in a higher Being. contrary modifications are opposed with their contradictories or replaced by others of a more beneficial nature, or the modifications of the mind are fixed on God and given a transcendental touch of the philosopher-stone of the infinitude of experience. Matter is separated from Spirit through contemplation on the essential distinction between the two and on the independence and absoluteness of the Spirit. The power of the will is such that it either completely excludes from consciousness all forms pretending to exist outside the Infinite or absorbs them into the consciousness of the Infinite. Thus the will is a way to perfection.

The path of the understanding is the rational method of investigation of experience. Here the understanding and the will become one and the will becomes another name for the movement of the force of the understanding. The experience of one's finitude implies the existence of the Infinite. The nature of the Infinite is opposed to that of the individual. God is accepted not merely because the scriptures have made mention of Him or because the teachers believe in Him, but because one's own experience and understanding become self-contradictory in their expressions when the Intelligent Infinite is not accepted, and also because the infinite consciousness comes to be the logical deduction of the inmost experience of the

finite individual. The longing for the infinite and the perfect is ingrained in the deepest recesses of everyone. The sense of the presence of the Infinite becomes the indicator of and the guide to the achievement of perfection.

Contemplation on the idea of the Infinite is the way. The objects of the universe are the phases of Consciousness. The existence of an individual is on the same level of reality as that of the other individuals. The subject and the object are related to each other as complements, and one is not superior or inferior to the other in the degree of the manifestation of Reality. Contemplation should therefore take the form of an assertion of the conscious Reality. Contemplation should therefore take the form of an assertion of the conscious Reality of the universe as a whole. Here the universe ceases to be a material presentation but disclose its true nature of consciousness. The knower and the known sink into a Reality larger than what they reveal at present. The individual becomes the specimen of what is systematically going on in the cosmos, and the one purpose of contemplation and meditation is to attune the individuals' processes to the cosmic process.

This attainment does not consist in any action of the body, but in an attitude of the mind. It is the intense affirmation in consciousness of the supreme validity of the indivisibility of the truth of the universe. This conscious affirmation of absoluteness should be continued until its actual realisation. The practice should be continuous and should be attended with an intense devotion to the ideal, based on clear perception and understanding. The prolonged meditation on the absolute, in this way, leads to perfection.

The necessary implications of the processes of meditation described above are absence of hatred, cultivation of universal love, freedom from attachment, peace of mind, self-control, turning away from desires, fortitude and a deep sense of service, - all based on correct understanding and introspection. The nature of the way is determined by the nature of the destination to be reached. The end

very much influences the nature of the means. The end is the evolution of the means; the means is a relative representation of the end. The characteristics of the end are reflected in those of the means, and by this standard one can judge the genuineness and correctness of the means. The end is the consummation of the process or the means, and the means is an indication of the characteristics of the end. The infinite is reflected in every individual, and hence no action on the part of the individual can afford to be completely isolated from the universal processes going on within the Infinite. The path to perfection is the recognition, by degrees, of the presence of the Infinite in every moment of the individualised processes of the universe.



Philosophy Of Bhakti

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandji Maharaj)

Bhakti is devotion of unselfish love. This is the literal meaning of the word. It comes from the root "Bhaj "–to serve or be deeply interested in, "Bhaj Sevayam" is the Sanskrit root. Bhakti is, therefore, an intense attachment to God or deep interest in God and things concerned with God.

The innate nature of all beings is to love an external object. We cannot but love or cherish something in the heart. For, truly, the Absolute alone is existent. Man is only an ego apparently separated from it. Love for external things is an unconscious internal urge to become unified with everything. For, in reality, man is everything, the Absolute Itself. He wants everything. Love is the fore-runner of Experience. Love is the craving. Experience is the fulfilment of it. None can live without love for something. "The creator pierced the senses with outword activity," and that rule applies to one and all here. The mind is the main sense of perception, for it is only the mind that perceives through the various channels of senses. The senses do not work when the mind does not.

But it is folly on our part to allow the mind to run extrovert in all directions. The dissipated rays of the mind take interest in countless objects of the universe, seen and heard equally. Yogins have come to the conclusion that the mind that is centred in one point of space at all times can do and undo things with supernatural force. It is the concentrated ray of the sun passing through a lens that burns things focused through it, and not so much the rays that are scattered here and there. Mind has to be concentrated on one substance, be it this or that. The mind should not jump from one thing to another. This is the way of Samsara. This should be stopped by controlling the mind through one-pointedness of it.

But man can concentrate his mind on any object. He can concentrate his mind on his wife or children as he usually does.

But this is not the concentration or love that is meant here. Meditation on or love towards the objects of earthly pleasure are binding chains which hurl down the Jiva to many cycles of birth and death. We mean here concentration on and love for God. This Love of unselfish origin is a ladder to Final Emancipation.

Emotions are generally considered as a hindrance in perfect Realisation. But only certain emotions are of a binding nature while certain other will librate the Jiva from bondage. The conception of God does not rouse in man any binding emotion. It is pure emotion devoid of carnality and attachment. One cannot develop earthly love towards God. The conception of God and love for God rouses the purest of emotions and it is far better than evil emotions which overpower man day and night. Those who cannot still all emotions must have at least pure emotions. This is the significance of divine emotion in Bhakti-Marga. Love for God can never be the type of love cherished towards wife, children and property. There is much difference, through even love for God is given an earthly colouring like that of son, husband, father, friend etc., by some devotees who find it difficult to break all earthly connections at a stretch.

How, then, does love for God give us Liberation from Samsara? Man is an egoistic entity. His only enemy is the ego. He feels that he is entirely different from other things of the world. He is convinced that he is sharply marked off from the universe by his physical body. He is sure that he is only the body even through he may try to deny it in any way. When he says "I" he always points out to his chest and not to the yonder tree. Many unfortunate Vedantins also feel that when they assert "I am Brahman," they mean only that the body is Brahman. It is very difficult to separate the "I" from the notion of the body. When one says "I am Ramakrishna," he means only that " the body is Ramakrishna." None can get rid of this notion of the body as the real Self. The ideal of all Yogas is to root out this sense of ego. And Bhakti Yoga is a method to kill the sense of separateness or egoism. It annihilates the modifications of the mind and fills the individual with Universeal Consciousness.

A Bhakta says: "O Lord! I am Thine. All is Thine. I am not a separate entity. I Have no power to do anything. You are doing everything taking myself as an instrument. O Lord! You are everywhere. I cannot even move, for You are everywhere. I am walking over Your Body. I am not able to live separately for I am seeing You everywhere. You appear as the man and the woman and as the old man that totters with a stick on the road, You have become everything. I have no independence. I am Your slave. A slave has no optional views. He can do only what the Master commands him to do. I am doing nothing. You only are doing through me. You are the Doer. You are the Enjoyer. I am nothing. Thy will be done."

This is the highest type of Love. This is Divine Love. The ego cannot assert itself, for God alone is everywhere. The mind cannot modify itself into Vrittis of senseobjects, for to him, there is no object except God. Who is there to be loved or hated? The Bhakta is therefore blissful at all times. The mind cannot think of anything. For, everything is God. "Yatra yatra mano yati tatra tatra samadhayah". Wherever the mind goes there it experiences Samadhi, for it does not find an object of enjoyment. God is filling every speek of space. The whole world is clothed with the glory of God. The saint and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious, the good and the bad, the man and the animal, — all are forms of God. How can the mind deal with them in an undivine way? There the mind experiences Samadhi. The mind has Consciousness. But it has no object. This is Samadhi. Samadhi is thoughtless Consciousness, objectless Knowledge. This is Para Bhakti. This is one with Vedantic Realisation. Vedanta-Sakshatkara and Para Bhakti are only two names for one and the same thing. The effect of both is annihilation of the ego or the destruction of the mind. The mind cannot live without an object of perception. God, who is supremly powerful, supremly wise and supremly blissful is pervading the entire atmosphere and the earth. He is the father and the mother, brother and sister. God is the consummation of all love and aspiration, desire

and ambition. He is the stoppage of all mental Vrittis. He is the ideal to be attained.

Objective consciousness is dead when the presence of God everywhere is felt. the sense-objects are transformed into the glory of Divinity, wife is no more an object of lust, and money is not a property to be coveted. All is God and nothing is but God. All are to be worshipped. "The ass, dog and the Chandala are to be saluted" said Sri Krishna to Uddhava, "for all is God". this is equal to saying *Sarvan Khalvidan Brahma*. There is no difference.

The illustration of the two varieties of Samadhi is found in the Rasa Lila of Sri Krishna. At first the Gopis perceive that all is Krishna alone. This is equal to Savikalpa Samadhi. Afterwards they feel that even they themselves are Krishna only. This is equal to Nirvikalpa Samadhi where the sense of ego is absent. The *Srimad Bhagavata* is the *Bible* of the devotees. It illustrates the various kinds of Rasas and modes of developing Bhakti.

"Control the mind, annihilate the ego". This is the essence of all Yogas. Whatever be the name given to the yoga and whatever may be the methods employed therein, the ideal to be achieved is annihilation of the mind and the ego. And this is the ideal of Bhakti-Yoga which is a very sweet and easy method of procedure. One has not got to curb his emotion and one has not got to run to the forests. He has to direct his emotions to God and he has to see God as present in the world. This is the essence of Bhakti-Sadhana. Bhakti is thus only a reflection of the love for the self which the Upanishads declare. Only the names are different: one calls it Self, another calls it God. Names do not matter much. It is feeling that counts. And that is the same.

Self-surrender is the highest form of Bhakti. Self-

surrender is surrender of the ego or individuality. And what remains is the Absolute of the Vedantins. Thus there is no difference between Vedanta and the highest form of Bhakti. The Bhakta surrenders the ego and Vedantin disintegrates the ego. Anyhow the ego is not there in both. There ideals are the same. Whether one eats rice or wheat, it is all the same. The purpose of both is to appease hunger. And there is no quarrel between the two. Whether you follow Bhakti or Vedanta, the effect is the annihilation of the ego. This is the truth.

There are two varieties of Bhaktas. The inferior type of Bhakta feels that everything is God except himself. He feels that he is the only one who is not God, and all else is God. This is the lower Bhakti and the presence of the ego hampers the ultimate preperience. The higher kind of Bhakta feels that he himself is included in God and that he has no independent existence. His ego is rooted out completely and this is the realisation of Para Bhakti or Vedanta. Here his emotions stop and he becomes a calm ocean without waves. His mind is stilled and it merges into the Universal Truth. This is the culmination of Bhakti which supreme devotees like the Gopis of Vrindavan and Gouranga Mahaprabhu experienced.

Love for God should be unselfish. There should be no earthy motive behind love for God. Otherwise, it becomes only a modification of infatuation and delusion. Arta, Jijnasu and Artharthi are all selfish Bhaktas. They cannot have the highest fruit of devotion. They are deluded by earthliness. Only a Jnani is a true selfless Bhakta, flooded with the majesty and grandeur of emotionless peace. The highest kind of Bhakta is one who wants God. He says: "O Lord! I want thee. Nothing else do I want! What is there which I have to get after getting Thee, the source and the root of everything ?" When wheat is obtained, bread, parotta, halva,

and all the modifications are obtained. When gold is obtained , all ornaments are obtained. When God is attained, everything else is attained. The devotee is lost in the consciousness of God. He has plunged into the ocean of Bliss. He has taken a bath in the sea of Nectar. He has drunk deep of the essence of Immortality. He has become an Apta-Kama, for he has attained God.

The text book of the highest kind of Bhaktas is the Srimad Bhagavata. It embodies the great ideals of renunciation, Devotion and Knowledge brought to a stage of unblemished perfection. This Purana, for above what a Purana is supposed to be like, is the cream of the devotional literature of the Hindus. It is the wealth of the lovers of God. It is a book Of divine wisdom, it advocates the path of non action. Sri Krishna-Chaitanya (Gouranga) is said to have considered this work as the greatest of Indian spiritual productions. It is a great authority on pure Spiritual Dharma, not as a means for Artha and Kama, but directly for Moksha. It has a fascination even for those who are keenly alive in finding out its defects. The whole body of the work is completely saturated with high expositions of Bhakti, Vairagya and Jnana—Devotion, Renunciation and wisdom. The Ideal of Ranunciation and Knowledge of Rishabhadeva, Jadabharata and the Brahmana of Avanti, the Devotion of Dhruva, Prahlada and Ambarisha, the Wisdom of Narad, Kapila, and above all the immortal life and teachings of Bagavan Sri Krishna to His devoted disciple Uddhava, form the nucleus of the Srimad Bhagavata.

It is a grave mistake to misrepresent and cavil at Bhakti, for the true spirit of every religion implies the adoration and love of God and the desire for Union with God. The highest conception of perperual Bliss is not mere prostration and sevice, but a loving union with the Ethernal. In emphasising true Devotion as a method for Salvation, it is not meant that services and love of humanity should

be paid a deaf car to: for all is God. He that loveth his neighbour, loveth God. The Bhakta identifies himself with all the beings of the world; he feels the universe as a mere manifestation of God, which is nothing short of advaitic realisation. Those men who truly love God with sincere feeling, cannot go astray. They do not perish. Even the sinner and the Sudra is lifted up to the magnanimous height of Emancipation. The kindness of God is immeasurable. God illumines their intellect, and takes care of them at all times. The Bhagvata Gita and Bhagavata are witnesses to this facts. The Bhakta will be guided by God, and illuminated with Wisdom for the attainment of the supreme Blessedness.



Yoga is the Constant Affirmation of Reality

(SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA)

The real life starts in you from the day when a little ray of awareness comes into you: "I am Atman, I am Eternal Being. I do not belong to the earth-plane. I am only a temporary passer-by. From somewhere, as a ray of flash of life, I entered into this body at birth. Parents have only given me this physical residence, this physical receptacle. But my real Parent is the Divine Source of my being, the Lord of the Universe. I come from Him. That is Sat-Chid-Ananda, the infinite ocean of Existence, the infinite ocean of Eternal Life. I am a ray from that Infinite Ocean, I am a ray from that Light of lights which you call God. That thing, nothing can change. That is the Truth. That is the Reality." This awareness comes when you have started to live. Then, your intellect and your mind will stand before you in a different light. They will not become your tormenters. They will become instruments for you to use to increase this Self awareness and to bring it into a state of perfect, complete experience Absolute. But first, this awareness comes to you as a conviction in your mind, your intellect: "Yes, it cannot be. I who refer to this body as 'my' body, I who refer to this intellect as 'my' intellect,-how can I be one with it? The very fact that I refer to these things as 'mine' means that it belongs to me and I am apart from it." When you refer to anything by the term mine, you affirm a duality: "This is my house, my car, my overcoat, my hat, my radio, my fountain pen." This is an affirmation of duality, as it were, in yourself and that thing to which you refer to as mine. You say: "My mind is restless today. Oh, my intellect cannot grapple with this problem. It is not in a state of clarity today. I cannot read, I cannot think, I cannot reason. My reason is not up to mark today. I will set aside the problems. I will think of it later." When you say 'mine', you are something distinct from this body, from this mind, from this intellect. Spontaneously you make this assertion. Unconsciously you affirm that you are different from these things. But, again you fall into error. That is Maya. And Yoga is the constant affirmation of

your Reality. Once you have got a little glimpse,— "I am immortal Atman"—catch hold of it, and cling to it. Never leave it. Never allow the cloud of forgetfulness to come and rob you of this inner life. Make up your mind : "From this moment I will become established and based upon this inner awareness. I am an Immortal Self. I am deathless being. I am divine in my essential nature. Nothing can touch me in this universe. The changing conditions, the body, mind and intellect,— they cannot really touch me or change me, because I am the changeless Reality. Thus, become established in your spiritual consciousness. And to keep moving towards an ever-progressive awareness of your real essential divine nature, and ultimately striving to enter into a state of absolute, profound, illumined experience of your true nature,— that is the goal of Yoga. Yoga wants you to experience your true divine nature. Yoga wants you to know that you are divine in your essential nature. you are a pure spirit. This is the utlimate goal of Yoga. Yoga gives you a graded series of discipline. Because, if the mind is constantly tossed about, taken out, scattered and dispersed amongst outer objects, it cannot dwell upon this Reality. It cannot hold on to this inner awareness. It must be made inwards. It must cease its restless running after diversity and become unified. And then it must dwell upon this inner truth, continuously, in a systematic way. That is the discipline of Yoga. Character, will-power, self-control constitute the very essence of Yoga. Only self-control will enable you to take the mind inward. And this self control will help you to restrain the turbulent senses from drawing the mind outward.

Moderation is the key-note of Yoga. In all things be moderate. And while you are in this practice, never do anything that becomes your own undoing. Your external life, environments, companions, the literature that you read and everything about your life should be oriented to these disciplines of self-mastery and self-control. It should be oriented. There should be no clash between your exterior life and your interior life. There should not be any friction between your inner life and your outer life. You try to discipline yourself inwardly, you go-completely out of discipline in your external normal,

daily life. That is not something that will succeed. The entire life should be integrated and oriented to this central purpose which you are trying to work out,—self-mastery, self-awareness, divine experience. Therefore, ultimately, Yoga has a pervasive implication in your life. You cannot merely confine Yoga to some time in the morning and evening, and then live the rest of it in something which has no concern with Yoga. Life and Yoga are identical. Life itself should be Yogic. The principle of Yoga should pervade all your thoughts, words and daily activities. Your habits and everything that concerns you must be oriented towards the Yoga ideal. Then, you will become a different person. Yoga enters into all levels of your life. You will become moderate in your eating and sense-activities. Give up things that are likely to excite the mind like smoking, drinking, over-eating, etc. Then, your health improves. Yoga has got a relevance to all the levels of man's life. When they first perfected this system as a system of Self-realisation, as a system of enabling you to control the mind, concentration, meditation and entering into a state of superconscious experience by which you become liberated from human consciousness and enter into a state of divine consciousness or universal consciousness, when they formulated in this manner, as generations and centuries passed, they felt the necessity to make it more realistic and more comprehensive in its application to the entire life of man. For, they found that if only this particular aspect of the attainment was stressed, it became lop-sided. And, man being an integrated being, began to neglect other aspects of his life. And therefore, the process of Yoga became handicapped by other aspects of his life. So they developed a succeeding system, side by side, with this central Yoga science, when they found that the body still was an instrument for the successful practice of any inner process. you have all heard: "a sound mind in a sound body" and "a sound body if there is a sound mind." They are interrelated. You cannot separate them. Medical science has now come to the same conclusion and says that most of the body's diseases originate in the mind. Psychosomatic diseases are there. And when they found out long long ago, many centuries

back, this absolute interconnectedness between body and mind, they evolved a parallel science of making the body strong and healthy. Because, for the attainment of desires and ambitions in life, and for the attainment of spiritual liberation, the most important key-factor is good health. If the body-instrument is not in a healthy condition, mind also becomes upset, mind becomes weak and the nervous system becomes shattered. When there is no willpower, you have no control over your senses. You overeat and overdrink. Because, in a state of health, you have controlled your senses. When the body is ill, it is very difficult to control your senses, because the mind becomes weak and the will-power will sear. Therefore, for all these attainments, whether the development of character and ethical ideals, whether the fulfilment of your normal legitimate, secular desires and material desires in life, or the attainment of the highest state of liberation,-even if you want to make a comfortable living and earn well, you must have a healthy body. Therefore, they evolved a parallel science which they called Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga is that science comprised of the various physical postures which you call Asanas and the different breathing exercises which you call the pranayama. And there are some more things, called Bandhas and Mudras. And, of course, the wonderful combination of all these together, which they evolved into a set of exercises is called the Sun-exercises, Surya Namaskara.

The relevance of yoga to your own life is, that in the process of searching for your essential Reality, you will begin to recognise the presence of this Reality in all beings. You begin to understand that That which is the Truth within is the Truth within all beings. And, therefore, for the first time in your life, you begin to glimpse the unity of Existence, the oneness of all life: "I am not different from the rest of the universe, the rest of life. All life throbs in unison. There is one common Consciousness that links all beings into inner spiritual unity, a oneness." And once this awareness comes into your life, your entire attitude towards others changes. Your approach towards problems, and towards all relationships takes on a different quality altogether. In the Upanishads it is stated : One

who has recognised the same divine principle in all beings, how can such a one hate ? How can such a one injure ? how can such a one utter a harsh word ? How can such a one be unkind to another ? From him, all hatred vanishes. If I hate someone, I hate myself. For, that which is in me is the same as within others. And a realtionship of a being who has entered into a state of Yoga becomes a relationship thrust in unity, a relationship that brings harmony, a relationship of love. "I look upon all beings as I look upon myself. That which is good to me, I do unto others. That which I know to be beneficial to me, that alone I give unto others. And that which I recognise to be bad for me, which I do not want to receive from life, I refrain from giving unto others, I refrain from doing it unto others." Thus, the essence of Dharma becomes fulfilled when one enters into a state of the Yoga way of life. Because, Yoga recognises the presence of the one common principle in all life. And, what is the essence of Dharma ? Go through all the scriptures of the world, go through the Bible, the Koran, the Thorah, the Zend-Avesta, the Vedas, the Buddhist scriptures, go through all the teachings of the prophets and the messengers of God. One rule of life, one mode of conduct which has been given to the whole world and humanity is: "Do not do unto others that which you regard as harmful to yourself. Do unto others as you wish to be done by others to yourself." This is the essence of Dharma. Any other type of conduct is only a conduct that arises out of selfishness. It is only the outcome of selfish desires. The conduct based upon this golden principle is the conduct that brings out the essence of Dharma. Go unto all teachings and all systems.— you will find this principle is the golden thread that links all saints and sages, all teachings, all scriptures, every injuction to man. The Yoga system provides for you the basis of your relationship with the Divine. And the basis is the recognition of the one living God in all beings. This is the relevance of Yoga to your own life. The principle of Yoga is that which removes from your eyes a veil which was hiding the Reality of man, the true, essential divinity of man. Once that veil is removed, you can never be the same person; you can never hate; you can never injure; you

can never regard anyone as your enemy or your foe; you can never treat anyone with contempt or regard anyone as someone who is low. Everyone becomes equal to you; everyone becomes divine to you. You see God in all. And your attitude towards everyone becomes an attitued of respect, of reverence. This is the relevance of Yoga in life. Harmony comes into your life. Your life becomes a centre of harmony. Clashes, conflicts, frictions, etc. begin to recede. Day by day, the more you enter into Yoga, the more beings to recede this negative strength. How great the world needs the adoption of the Yoga way of life!. We can plainly see how in these days the entire world, the relationship from man to man, race to race, nation to nation, is based upon clash, conflict, hatred, suspicion, and the tendency to destroy. This is the very negation of the vision of the science of Yoga. The science of Yoga is your true vision. it says: "O man! open your eyes and behold that there is no duality. Differences are only on the surface, as appearances. There is only oneness. There is only one principle that pervades all life. See the one in the many. Feel the unity in diversity and try to unify and harmonise. Let love become the ruling principle of your life. Let unity become your vision of life."

The Yoga way of life provides for us the basis for resolving of one's conflict. It provides for us the very foundation for a lasting solution. Because, trying to unify people upon other bases, they always perpetuate this conflict. If real unity is to be brought about, it should find a basis that embraces the entire universe, whole existence, all life. And that basis only is the spiritual vision. It is a spiritual view of all life, that the one Divine principle that is the source and origin of all things is immanent in this creation which it has created. It has entered into that which it has created. It is present everywhere. And that common Essence is therefore something which is one, which is identical in all things. So, in God we find our unity. God bless you.



Principles for a Reconstruction of Human Aspiration

(SRI SWAMI KRISHNANANDA)

The suggestion, then is that the aim of evolution is ultimately spiritual and the sense of the spiritual has to be comprehended in its proper significance. It is to be realised that there has to be a unifying blend of the fourfold Aim of Existence, viz., *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha;*— a coming together of the moral, the economic, the vital and Infinite values in a concentrated focus of thought, speech and action. It is not infrequently that spirituality is regarded as 'a phase' of life, an aspect of human pursuits, and even an other-worldly aim, to be thought of at the fag-end of one's life. Nothing can be a greater travesty of truth than this sort of erroneous thinking and evaluation. How can the Infinite value be relegated to an aspect, a phase of life, or an other-worldly concern ? Does not the Infinite include all things, — the other-worldly as well as the this-worldly, the transcendent as well as the temporal ? Else, how could it be the Infinite ? How, then, if spirituality is the process of the pursuit of the Infinite, can it be a segmented aspect of life ? would it not then embrace the whole of life within itself, and would not life itself be impossible without it ? Yes; the spiritual value is not 'a value' but 'the value' of all life', without which life would lose its very meaning and be turned into an essenceless phantom.

It also follows from the concept of the Infinite that, if the Infinite value has to include the moral, the economic, and the vital values within itself, so that Dharma, Artha and kama get subsumed under Moksha; then the pursuit of morality, wealth and personal satisfaction in life has perforce to get included in the pursuit of Moksha or liberation from the thraldom of life, i.e., the *spiritual* includes the temporal. The complaint of our communist friends and socialwellfare workers against religiion and spirituality, if there is any, is thus without any basis; for, it is founded on a misconception of the spiritual as well as the religious, which, latter, in fact, is but the outward expression of the spritual. As it was pointed out, the human mind is not constituted in such a way as to enable it to

comprehend this tremendous truth behind the drama of life, so that the human mind always complains against existing conditions and distrusts even the logically deducible consequences that could be reasonably inferred from the observation of the phenomenon called life. The great tragedy of human life has been the unwarranted isolation of the spiritual from the temporal and the consequent clinging to an over-emphasis of the material needs of this world, or to a supposed religious ideal confined to the otherworld. It is due to a thorough-going misrepresentation of truth that we have among us materialists, atheists and hedonists on one side and a theoretically-idealistic religionists, priests and pontiffs on the other side, one contending with and opposed to the other and creating a scene of conflict in the world. There should be no wonder if either side gets frustrated in its pursuit because the demand of both the sides seems similar to the point involved in the humorous effort to keep half-a-hen for cooking and half for laying eggs.

Would people realise at least today that existence in the world cannot be bifurcated from the existence of the Central Aim of Life? Gathering the outcome of our thoughts expressed earlier, we may proceed further to the art and the enterprise of blending *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha* into a single body of human aspiration. As was indicated, this is a difficult job, for the mind is not accustomed to think in such an integral fashion. But it has to be done, and one cannot escape it, if life is to have any meaning and not be a mere desultory drifting from one objective to another, every moment of time.

Artha, or the material object of one's pursuit, may be considered first, since it is this that seems to be the primary centre of life's attraction in to the immediately visible and tangible field of experience. The object is naturally the physical something that presents itself before a sense-organ, — seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or touching. It is impossible to have a proper notion of an object unless we have a correct apprehension of the structure of the senses themselves. Normally, it is supposed that the objects of

the senses are variegatedly spread out in space and each sense grasps a particular object. It is also belived that the object is 'outside' the particular sense which apprehends it. Thus, two conceptions are involved in sense-perception, namely, that the objects are differently distributed outside in space and that they are exteranal to the senses perceiving them. Without this twofold notion sense-contact and sense-satisfaction will lose their proper significance. It is on this stated assumption that the senses seem to be asking for their own respective comforts and pleasures. But their needs and askings of this kind automatically get grouped under what may be called the 'vulgar view of life', if it can be shown that the objects are neither variegated nor are they really external to the senses. Any satisfaction rooted in a misconception about it can not continue for long, nor can it be considered a real necessity of life. A final investigation into the structure of things would not be within the range of the 'vulgar thinking' which goes hand in hand with the untutored assumption of the senses, but the purified reason coupled with a more acute observation will reveal that the truth of things is far removed from the sensory notions of the uneducated mind. We may say that our knowledge of things cannot be regarded as ultimately valid unless it becomes scientific in the correct sense of the term. It should be noted that an object is a concentrated group of characters brought together by factors with a universal implication. An object is only an outer form of the inner concrescence of forces which tie themselves into knots, as it were, into what we call as object in space and time, and it is only the outer form that the senses can perceive, not the inner implication of this subtler activity that is going on within the structure of things beyond the ken of the senses. Physicists prefer to call objects as fields of force, rather than things or substances, by which what is meant is that an object is co-extensive with other objects, as a ripple in the ocean is substantially co-extensive with the entire body of the ocean. This fact is brought out in a more prominent manner in & famous verse of the Bhagavad-Gita where, in connection with a description of the way in which senses come in contact with objects, it declares that 'properties'

move among 'properties' (*Gunah Guneshu Vartante).* What this Yoga text means hereby is that the 'properties' or *'Gunas'* of the Mother of all material formations known as prakriti, are equally present in the senses and their objects; or, in other words, the very same Prakriti constituted of the forces of equilibrium, kinetics and dynamics (Sattve. Rajas and Tamas) is present in the senses as well as the objects. What the substance is of the structure of the senses is also the substance of the structure of the objects, so that it cannot be said that the objects are external to the senses, just as there is no point in saying that the ocean is external to the waves upon it, though we may imagine that the waves have every right of imagining that the ocean is outside them. But how far this is from truth needs no iteration.

Moreover, it is not difficult to notice that everything in this world is made up of the five elements,— Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether, — in a variety of permutations and combinations, wherein are included the objects of senses as well as our own bodies which are the receptacles of the senses. Even crudely speaking, what separates one object from another is space, and space, unfortunately, enters into the constitution of every object including our bodies. Where then comes externality of objects, the outsideness of things? If things are not outside, how can one pursue or long for them ? *Kama,* which is desire for objects loses its ground when the structure of the objects is known to be inextricably woven into the pattern of one's body and senses. That all this is not a part of the curriculum of our education in our institutions will only be an additional credit to the glory of our educational system, which leaves a student at sea the moment he comes out of his *alma mater,* in flying colours. Life begins to stare hard on one's face when the educational course is completed. Truly, education seems to begin only then! The significance of *Artha* and *Kama,* the objects and the desire for them needs no large commentary to explain them in the light of the foregoing analysis. The objects and the desire for them. *Artha* and *Kama*, then seem to harass us only until we do not know *Dharma,* or the Law of Truth.

Dharma, which is the name for the righteousness that is rooted in the makeup of all things in the universe, is the ruling factor that determines the significance and validity of both the existence of objects and one's longing for them. This is why, perhaps, Bhagavan Sri Krishna Mentions in the Gita that He, as the All-Pervading Presence, is *Kama* or desire which is not opposed to *Dharma* or righteousness. But that desire cannot be regarded as being in consonance with righteousness or the rule of Nature, which regards objects as sheerly 'external' to the senses, a proposition which has been ruled out in the Bhagavad-Gita itself while it announced that 'properties' move among 'properties'. The Bhagavad-Gita also mentions, in its 18th Chapter, that the notion which regards a particular thing as if it is everything is to be considered as the worst type of understanding, or knowledge. Every form of desire is usually of this character in the sense that desire clings to a particular object taking it for the whole value of life or sometimes a group of objects regarding them as the entire aim of existence. Such a desire which is associated with the lowest type of understanding is what usually goes by the name of *Kama* or longing for *Artha* or object. This is definitely not in agreement with the principle of *Dharma* which is rightly defined as that which holds all things together as a sort of universal gravitational centre (*Dharanat dharma iti ahuh)*

It is hard to give a dictionary-definition of *Dharma* or find an apt synonym for it in the English language; for, *Dharma* is that all-pervasive cohesive principle which keeps all things in a harmonious state of integration. Now, this harmony and integration is discoverable in every level of life. Physically, it is the energy which holds one's body in unison and does not allow it to disintegrate; vitally, it is the force which keeps the *Prana* moving in harmony with the body; mentally, it is the power which maintains the sanity of thought and keeps the psychological apparatus working in an orderly fashion and not allow it to run riot in a haphazard manner; morally, it is the urge which recognises as much value in others as in one's own self and regards in them the proper status which they are occupying in

their own places; intellectually, it is the logical principle of coherence of judgment and correspondence of idea with fact. In the external universe, it acts as the force of gravitation, physically; as mutual reaction, chemically; as the principle of growth and sustenance, biologically; as co-operative enterprise, socially. Finally, it is the principle of the unity of the Self, spiritually.

If the Divine Being can be found present in a desire that is in consonance with *Dharma,* as the Bhagavad-Gita puts it in its 7th Chapter, then, naturally, no ordinary desire for objects of sense can be regarded as divine, for, it obtains the sanction of Divinity only when it is in agreement with the principle of *Dharma* which, as we have seen, is so vast and comprehensive that, when it becomes the divinely acceptable feature in the human being, it ceases to be an over-mastering passion as in the case of mortal desires but becomes a suggestion for the recognition of the Infinite in all finite values of life.

This majestic vision of life is manifest in human society as the order of *Varna* and *Asrama,* two terms as difficult to understand as the word *Dharma.* Usually, *Varna* and *Asrama* are translated as the 'caste system' and the tradition of the 'four orders' of life. This forthright and offhand definition has led to many misconceptions about the significance of these phases of the methodology of life, so that *Varna,* according to this interpretation, becomes a disrupting factor in life, most undersirable and pernicious, and *Asrama* a meaningless grandmother's superstition of an antedeluvian type. But, not so is the truth of the matter.

Varna does not mean 'colour' referring to the *Aryan* or the Dravidian difference of skin, nor indicating anything like the superior and the inferior in the social organisation of human beings. To think so would be a total misconstruing of fact. *Varna* is not a 'colour' visible to the eyes but a 'degree' conceivable by the mind; which means to say that by the term Varna we are to understand the degrees of expression of *Dharma* in human society in such a way

that their coming together or co-ordination will sustain human society and existence. Though life is a continuous and single whole enshrining in its bosom knowledge, power, richness and energy, all together, it cannot be manifest in any particular human individual in such a comprehensive fashion unless he is a Supreman (*Ati-manava)*. In ordinary human beings, such a blending of the four factors is impossible. There is always a preponderance of either understanding, will, emotion or action, practically corresponding to these four factors contributory to the essential necessities of life, which cannot ignore any of these four aspects. Inasmuch as these factors of life's growth and sustenance are diversely found preponderating in different individuals, it has been found necessary to cause a co-ordination of the different groups of individuals in whom there is a pre-eminence of these factors, separately. Just as the head cannot do the work of the legs, the eyes cannot hear and the ears cnanot see, and so on, so that the perfection of the organism is maintained by a co-ordination of these limbs and organs of the body, human society is held together as a single growing and prospering organism by a co-ordination of those individuals in whom there is a predominant manifestation of the mentioned factors, severally. The question of 'superior' and 'inferior' among the individuals does not arise here, since the purpose is to help the growth of each and everyone towards a complete view of life and an achievement of the total value of life by each person, enabling each one, in this way, to participate in all the four values, the blending together of which alone can be regarded as complete fulfilment. The absence of anyone of these factors or values would point to a serious defect in the organism of human society and the indivudual. And happiness is nowhere to be found where perfection is absent. The psychic and spiritual personality of an individual seeks growth and expansion in the process of evolution, and this growing and intensifying process of life assumes a marked emphasis at a certain stage, in which condition thc individual's attitude to life puts on a distinct form of thought and conduct. These stages are what are known as the *Asrámas,* and they are mainly four : the stage of the

exuberance and energy of adolescence, which needs training and discipline and seeks learning and knowledge; the stage of outer activity and social relationship, wherein one fulfils the normal human desires and performs the expected duties as a unit of the wider society of people: the stage of greater maturity of thought in which one detects the evanescence of temporal values and material possessions, and aspires to delve into the truth behind phenomena; the stage of illumination in which one lives a life of atonement with the ultimate Reality : The 'stages' are the 'orders of life' necessitated by the progressive emphasis which it receives in onward evolution.

Yoga has been defined as union with Reality, in its different degrees of manifestation, both within and without. Thus, by the fulfilment of one's functions in life through the laws and disciplines of *Varna* and *Asrama*, one moves gradually from the outer to the inner,—from the external forms to the deeper meaning of things,—and rises upward, from the gross to the subtle, and from the subtle to the ultimate essence of existence. The concepts of the four *Purusharthas,— Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha;* of the four *Varnas,—* the classes of society wielding spiritual, political, economic and manual power; of the four *Asramas,*—the stages of study and discipline ; performance of duty, indivudually as well as socially; withdrawal from attachment to perishable things; and communion with the Supreme Reality;— These sum up the total structure of life in its integrality, excluding nothing, and including everything in its most comprehensive gamut.

It was pointed out that this all-encompassing picture of life is difficult to visualise, at one stroke, and so the ancient adepts have instituted a three-fold approach to this truth of life, viz., the envisagement of life through the concepts of the objective (*Adhibhuta*), the subjective (*Adhyatma*) and the super-normal Deity aspect of Reality (*Adhidaiva*) transcending both the objective and the subjective aspects of experience. Here, again, the proper way would be to move from the outward to the inward and then go to the upward; which means that we have to take into consideration,

first of all, the physical and social reality outside, then study and discipline our individual life and personality, and finally go upward to the higher superintending controlling power which would point to an ascent to one's final Goal. In our capacity as contents of the physical world and parts of human society we would do well, initially, to conduct our selves in such a way that we do not violate the laws of Nature outside and the rules of the community and society in which we live. The laws of health and hygiene and of ethics and morality in society are, thus, preliminary requisites in this grand evolutionary process of human aspiration. The five elements,—Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether,—have their own laws and principles of action which restrict our lives to their ways of working and demand of us an obedience to their constitutional functions. Purity of food, water and air, among other things, is called for in the maintenance of health. The alleviation of hunger and thirst and heat and cold, and protection from the excesses of Nature's forces are the creature comforts that anyone would need to live a life of reasonable ease. Without this minimum of aid, the very basis of one's physical existence might become insecure. Over and above these minimum requisites, there is the call of society upon the individual, namely, loyalty and allegiance to its customs, manners and traditions, apart from a humane behaviour and conduct in respect of others around oneself. Herein, the requirements of *Varna* and *Asrama* get included, and, in addition, there is the need to observe the canons of not hurting others, being truthful with others, not appropriating the belongings of others, non-indulgence in the cravings of the senses beyond the limits permitted by the rules of health, and absence of greed in general. While these may be regarded as disciplines pertaining to one's life in the 'objective' world (*Adhibhautika-Prapancha*), they have some relevance to one's 'subjective' (*Adhyatmika*) life, as well, since these outward disciplines of conduct greatly influence and reveal one's inner character. Study of exalting literature, such as the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita, and such other powerful revelations of higher wisdom, a life of simple living and high thinking,

of servicefulness and austerity in one's demeanour, are further regulative trainings in one's personal or subjective life. Beyond the objective and the subjective levels, there is the transcendent (*Adhidaivika)* Control exerted by the Omnipresent Almighty Being, through its 'manifestations', which are usually called 'gods' in religious parlance. These 'gods' have a hierarchy of their own, and they differ in their degree of the Almighty Power which they express through their forms of manifestation. To give a rough idea of what such a hierarchy would mean, we have, as we have already noted earlier, the gradations mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad,-the realms of the Gandharva, Pitri, Deva, Indra, Brihaspati and Prajapati. These are names of wider and wider revelations of Reality in gradually increasing intensity, in its successive stages. The highest cosmical manifestations, however, are called *Virat, Hiranyagarbha* and *Isvara,* meaning its physical, subtle and causal conditions. The Aim, ultimate, is the Absolute-*Brahman.*



The Experience Of The Real

(H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj)

The realisation of the true substratum of life is attained through a withdrawal of the multiplicity of the mental rays, which are dissipated in recognising false dualism and the vagaries of unreality. Egoism or the idea of separateness is a strong rampart that shields the cosmic Truth from the approach of the individual soul. The collected form of the dissipated rays of the internal psyche is made use of in penetrating the wall of egoism and disintegrating it into the freedom of Infinite Existence.

The process, lies through cultivating the sense of selflessness, which is developed by negating the idea of doership, and a burning spirit of renunciation.

Renunciation, which is the foremost requisite of all spiritual attainments , does not necessarily imply discarding of garments and an austere abandonment of the necessities of life, or seeking solitude in wilderness with an uncleansed mind. Renunciation is an expanded state of the mine, which, through, the restraint of the outgoing senses, develops a power to lift up the individual consciousness from its separated tabernacle and allows it to find its real Self in the infinite manifestation and not merely in a particular idol, or an individual body, be it one's own self.

This is the reason why sages of wisdom are not attached to any physical sheath, in particular. For all bodies are theirs. This leads to an indifference to separate existence, which is swept away by the breath of universal life. Those who feign to be indifferent to their body need not necessarily , possess this infinite Consciousness: for they are cheated by an arrogant attachment to the limited external pleasures derivable through asceticism. It is another form of worldliness, rather a more formidable appearance of it , which is very difficult to transform. Aspirants have to be warned against such self-deceit and failure to progress through ethical perfection and selfless service.

Selflessness is not merely self-denial or service done without reward. The experience of selflessness is achieved through beholding the one self in each and every being , including the wicked and the ungrateful. Such an expansion of the self leads to the glory of the manifestation of the real Essence. Selflessness is the kernel of all conscious efforts directed towards Self-realisation. It is a pressing of the lower consciousness of separate individuality in order raise up the other side of the balance, the higher consciousness of the Absolute, and thus bring in the levelling condition of Nature into a state of immobile eternity.

Different forms of social service, personal service to the sick and the suffering , negation of the superiority-complex through self-denial, menial labour and fraternisation with those whom the society will not grant equality, are all different fields for cultivating selflessness and breaking open the barrier of separateness.

When the consciousness of the true selflessness is established, life becomes a continuous and positive meditation on the Reality. There is an intense and continuous affirmation of the indivisible Existence.

The science of selflessness embodies in itself the methodical process of the entirety of the systems of all Yogas. A truly selfless service needs nothing at all in particular in space or time. It is a natural outflow of Truth. It is a service not meant to enjoy the gratification of the person served, or the usefulness of the service done; it is not meant to win for the server any terrestrial comfort or egoistic enjoyment . But it is a singular process of transformation of the individuality of the server and the served into one, homogeneous whole.

None save the one who serves should be conscious (not in the egoistic way) of the selfless act that is done; not even the one who is benefited need know who has done it. The whereabouts and the particulars of a really selfless Sevaka should not be disclosed unlike the names and designations of many munificent donors such as can be found in the marble slabs of different philanthropic organisations. This need apply only to the seekers of Nivritti, not to each and everybody, for evidences of such munificence are also

necessary to serve as an inspiration to others. Such an attitude as prescribed for the Nivritti student, particularly a neophyte, is compulsory. Otherwise , the server may enjoy the gratefulness of the person served and thus lose the full benefit derivable through the selfless act. That other person should not know it goes without saying. Such stored up feelings of selfless satisfaction effected through selfless service, which would otherwise have been dispersed and spread out externally for the purpose of selfish enjoyment derivable through the contact with objective entities, act as a powerful spade to dig out the depths of the ego.

Every act in common parlance is directed towards the achievement of an end particularised in time and limited by space. But truly unselfish act done for no particular object in view is a challenge for the separative ego which cannot live without relating itself to something that is marked in space and time. Such an act which does not feed the individual self-sense with its diverse requirements compels the relative self-interest to dissolve itself in interest Absolute. It soars high above all limitations and engages itself in its establishment in the perfect satisfaction and the uncontradicted experience of the Reality.

Such an establishment in the state of the Self unimpeded by he phenomenal laws or separative restrictions is of an infinite rejoicing in the free flow of the law of the spirit in life divine. Divine homogeneity is the highest state of the fullest freedom of existence and the forces that try to hinder such an expansion of truth and try to keep up the network of opposing and relative factors are, therefore, undivine. Such being the ideal of acts and experiences, the means of approach to it cannot be detrimental or opposed to the natural essence of the ideal. The Absolute has to be approached with the spirit of the Absolute Oil does not mix with water and heterogeneous forces do not form a union. To realise the state of Absoluteness, the relative individual is required at first to be hypnotised into absolute faith and then led into the absolute path which leads to the absolute Experience.

All spiritual efforts, whether belonging to the active, emotional or the intellectual aspects of man, have to be equipped with the common and the necessary expanding of the individualised sense

into infinite Consciousness. Without such a knowledge or consciousness of the fundamental fact of existence, life becomes intense with conflict and war between the opposing forces. It is impossible for the individual to blossom into Infinity in the midst of such a heated strife among disturbant powers of nature without reconciling and pacifying them in a higher expensive consciousness where they disclose their inner truths, which melt into the bosom of the Reality with a natural embrace.

The awareness of this true and undying law of the Spirit becomes the foundation upon of the Spirit which are raised the four pillars of Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana. The pillars cannot fail to support the roof of attainment, for they are grounded in Truth and held firm by the unfailing law of it. The beginning and the end of Sadhana have to imperatively manifest identical natures, though the one is only a thought and the other an exact experience. A theoretical thought of Truth ends in its practical experience, for thought is not an entirely different form but is a shadow of the Truth.

The shadow gives an ideas of its substance, through not satisfactorily. The illusion has to be pierced through illusion itself, for it is a self-expression of its Substratum. The rays advertise the nature of the sun. The physical world gives out the nature of the mental world, which in turn reflects the nature of the Reality of which the lower manifestations are only imperfect modifications.

The method of approach to the Absolute, however low in standard, should therefore reflect natures which belong to the essential reality of Existence. Such conscious effort produces a very quick effect and there then hails the revelation of Experience-Whole . Otherwise there is a failure of the ego-sense in its infinite pursuits and painful continuation of the vain struggle for perfection in separarive and conflicting ignorant consciousness. A supreme knowledge of the Eternal Truth, above all such miserable plights, is Divine Life, a life in the central, limitless bliss, and brilliance of the heart of Infinity.



Life Is One

(Sri Swami Chidananda)

There was a poet who once wrote,

"You cannot pluck a little flower
Without the shaking of a star."

All life is one. There is one common consciousness which links the life of all beings into one great cosmic unity.

There was once a Sufi mystic who was established in this state of cosmic consciousness. He was a gardener. One day a friend of his came to visit him. In the conversation that they were having he was distracted and the sharp gardening tool which he was using hit his leg. His friend was startled , for he saw, oozing out of the wound in his leg, not red blood but a thin, pale fluid. It was the sap of plants. This Sufi mystic was in an a absolute rapport, a perfect harmony with all life. He was at one with the plants, He had entered into their very consciousness. His life and their life was entirely one.

Many other stories could be told about mystics who have attained this state of absolute consciousness with all life. One such cosmic being was sitting in that state one day in the courtyard of a great temple situated on the bank of a river. A ferryboat was carrying passengers across the river. One disembarking passenger queried the ferryman regarding the cost of the fare. First there was a discussion. Then hot words. Then a lively argument. Suddenly the passenger lunged forward and hit the ferryman. And this mystic sitting nearby was so sensitive that the blow caused him to fall over unconscious . It was as though the passenger has delivered the blow on him.

There is another poem in which the poet says,

"One touch of nature makes all life kin." The poet here refers to the original nature in which all forms of life are related to the One. Vedanta proclaims the oneness of all existence. Vedanta

declares that there is one divine principle present in all things. The first Sloka of the first Upanishad says, "Whatever exists is pervaded by the one great Cosmic Being. That Being permeates, saturates , and pervades all things in the universe." Even modern science is now confirming this great truth. At the back of all this diversity, at the back of all this multifariousness, there is something common to all life. If you touch it , you experience cosmic consciousness.

The Vedantic method is deductive; the scientific method is inductive. The Vedantic method starts with the one and proceeds to the many. The scientific method starts with the many and proceeds to the one. Now it seems almost as though modern science, especially modern physical science, is proposing a theory which corroborates nearly verbatim the central thesis of the ancient Sakta school of philosophy in India. The Sakta school postulates this thesis: that universal energy or cosmic force is the ultimate factor in existence. Isn't science saying much the same thing today? But science does not specify whether this force is conscious and intelligent or not. Whereas the Sakta philosophy is very specific on this point. The Sakta philosophy states that energy or force is the very nature of pure Consciousness. Modern scientists are non-committal on this point. Everything is the outcome of force. This they do admit . Force is conscious. This they do not at all accept. For, if this force is conscious the implications is clear. There must be some vast intelligence guiding the movement of the cosmos –an intelligence much greater than man's reducing man , in fact, to no more than a puny pawn pushed about according to the degree of that great intelligence . The very idea is so intolerable to most scientists, it is so ego-unflattering, that they refuse to accept it. Only to a few , only to those who are humble and unpretentious, is it credible.

The Sakta school of philosophy plainly states that man borrows light from another Source of intelligence. Without this light the intellect would be inert, for it is that light which illumines the intellect and enables it to function. Man borrows it from pure Consciousness.

It is, therefore, pure Consciousness which lies behind man's intellect. Pure Consciousness alone is real.

The intellect is conscious when man is in the waking state, semiconscious when he is in the dream state and unconscious when he is in the deep sleep state. This consciousness is not continuous. When you wake up in the morning, it rises, but it sinks or sets, so to speak, when you go to sleep at night. It is therefore transitory and temporary, not permanent or real. If it were real, it would never be discontinued. The consciousness of '*I am*' , on the other hand , is always present even in the deep sleep state. " I slept well," you say on waking up in the morning. So the consciousness is continuous. You affirm the existence of an 'I' at all times: waking , dreaming and sleeping. The 'I' principle is the substratum upon which all the three states of your consciousness are supported. This 'I' principle is common to all sentient beings . It is a mysterious factor which binds life into one great cosmic unity. Ponder upon it. For eventually you must know everything about it.

"The word would be much better place and people here would be much , much happier if everybody would do one simple thing," an old Truth-seeker once said to me. "What is that, Tabby?" I asked. "Let everybody write in the air in huge letters: MYOB !" was the answer. "Tabby, what is MYOB?" I asked . " *Mind Your Own Business*!" she said and added, "If everybody would mind his own business, the world would be quite all right."

I found another meaning in her little homily. Do you know What Your Own is in Sanskrit? The word in Sanskrit is *Atman.* Atman is your own self. So , mind your own business really means mind *Your Own Self.* Now this Atman-business is the one thing we don't do . We turn to minding other people's business instead. That is why we do not realise ourselves. We should be filling our lives with a great concern for this Atman, pondering upon it reflecting over it , meditating upon it, living to attain the fullest experience of it, for this Atman is out own self.

Lord Buddha put much the same thing in a different way. In his parting message to the Bhikkhus he said, "Ananda and all ye Bhikkhus , listen to the Tathagata. Do not neglect your higher self. Always be diligent in your own welfare. This is not selfishness. This is annihilation of the little self. And when the petty self perishes, what remains? There is no word that exists to describe that which remains —in a way which relates to the self—because the self has ceased to be."

Recall the story of Sinbad the Sailor. Sinbad was shipwrecked and his body was cast up by the sea on to the shore of an island . There he fell asleep. And when he woke up , he found himself all alone. One day he found an old man lying on the beach, whose legs were all shrivelled up. The old man begged Sinbad to be lifted up. So, out of compassion, Sinbad raised him in to his shoulders. But as he did so, the old man coiled both his legs around Sinbad's neck and locked them. Then Sinbad was hag-ridden by this old man of the sea. " Take me here! Take me there! Let me have this! Let me have that !" And Oh, Sinbad almost fell into despair. Then an idea came to him. He took the old man one day to the grape-vines. The old man gorged himself on grapes, got intoxicated and in a swoon loosened his grip on Sinbad's neck. Then in one great thrust Sinbad threw him off.

Just as Sinbad was hag-ridden by this old man of the sea , so are we all hag-ridden . The old man riding us is the ego. The ego has been holding us in a tight grip for ages. He is a diehard. Our bondage is due to this little 'I' We must shake it off to be free. That is the only way.

In the Kathopanishad there is a boy called Nachiketas who asks Yama, the great Lord of justice, "Why are all beings in this world in such misery?" And Yama says, "You are asking for the knowledge of the Immortal Self! Ask again, O Nachiketas! Ask for something else. Even the gods long for this knowledge." But Nachiketas is adamant. And soon recognising the worthiness of his

disciple, Yama initiates him into the knowledge of immortality.

"When he created all beings, O Nechiketas the Creator put some Rajas into their minds. The outcome of this Rajas is the outgoing tendency of the mind. The mind loses itself amidst the countless objects of the universe. And the natural consequence of this loss is discontentment and dissatisfaction for man. As long as the movement of the mind is outward, man can have no peace , no rest, no bliss. Rare , indeed, O Nachiketas , is the one who perceives the true inner state of the mind, arrests its outgoing tendency, draws it inward and turns it Atman-ward He is the real hero. He is the one who succeeds in entering into direct inner communion with the Atman. There he finds peace, rest and bliss.

"Be thou in-seeking O Nechiketas! Be thou in-gazing ! Withdraw your mind from passing phenomena. Direct it deep within. In the centre of yourself , Eternity abides.You must discriminate. You must not allow the sense-object to draw your mind without, to lure you away from the path. It is at first very difficult. Unthinking foolish men are easily beguiled and deluded. They forsake the path of good and rush into the path of the merely pleasant . Beware! The path of the pleasant does not lead to peace. It seems to be very pleasant in the beginning, but in the aftermath it is very unpleasant and very painful. It is ,moreover, not conducive to your highest welfare."

Who knows the difference between the path of the good and the path of the merely pleasant? Who resolutely turns away from the merely pleasant and voluntarily elects to go in the direction of the good? He is the one to whom the victory comes. He is the one to whom the Atman yields itself.

Be intent upon this Atman-business . This Atman is all your own. Awake ! Arise! Walk not as one who slumbers, but as one who is wide awake, as one who discriminates. Those in whom discrimination is not active slumber, even though their eyelids are up.

In my school-days I once read a little poem called, I think , 'The Vision of Meza'. Meza is taken by his teacher up to the top of a mountain and told to look down into the valley below. As he is gazing at the lush green verdure and the sheep and goats grazing on the slopes, suddenly he sees a mist beginning to creep along the valley floor. The scenery gradually disappears. Meza tries to penetrate the mist when his master abruptly calles out, "Look, look!" And , he sees , suspended in the air, a tiny bright spot shining with clarity. A bridge appears in it with many arches, both ends of which are shrouded in the mist. "Look again, look again!" the master says. And as Meza peers again, more intently, more closely than before, he sees that the bridge is not empty but swarming with people. Some are dancing, some are swaying and singing. Some are running after bright things, bubbles and butterflies. Some are clinging closely to possessions. Some are moving hurriedly forward at a fast gait. Some are moving along cautiously with great care. Then some people suddenly disappear. Meza takes another look. Very few are reaching the other side. "O master," he cries , "explain this to me!"

"This is the bridge of life , O Meza. All these being are trying to cross the bridge to the other side. But very few, as you see , are able to do so . Why? Because there are so many trap-doors hidden in the bridge . They open downward into the stream so that most people are plunged into the water and washed away. Those who really want to reach the other side are rare. And of these, few are vigilant and careful enough to avoid all the pitfalls on the way. Great is the rejoicing on the other side when one or two are able to do so." Then the vision fades.

Remember "The Vision of Meza." Be diligent. Keep your gaze ever fixed upon the goal and avoid the pitfalls through discrimination. Rush not towards the merely pleasant. Move towards the good even though it is hard! Then *Mind Your Own Business*! Attain the Atmic experience. And reach life's goal.

You have heard these ideas. Now ponder upon them. Reflect over them . Do not allow them to leave your mind. Try to see in what way they are meaningful to you in your life. Are they significant? Realising their significance, you will convert them into pearls of pure wisdom. Gradually your wisdom will grow and with it your awareness of the truth these ideas represent . Slowly you will come to feel that all life is one.



The Spirit of Sadhana

(Sri Swami Krishnananda)

The unselfishness of an action is to be judged by the extent to which it bears relevance to the universal set-up of things. It has, in fact, nothing to do with my thinking, your thinking or anyone's thinking. The nature of Truth does not depend upon human thought and feeling. It has an existence of its own, and it, in its exalted supremacy and majestic universality and comprehensiveness, determines even the thoughts and the feelings of people ; —not the other way round. It is curious that every human being enshrines an intrinsic habit of holding that truths are judged by human thought, or much worse, one's own individual thought. The human cannot become the divine merely because human history has passed through many centuries of temporal process. The divine is a qualitative transformation of the general attitude of consciousness and not a quantitative calculation of syllogistic conclusions. When truth takes possession of us, we no more think it or judge it in our own way, but participate in its being, which is a different thing altogether from our definitions of truth, law and justice ; goodness, virtue and rectitude.

It makes little difference whether one is a student on the path of devotion or the path of knowledge. Sadhakas, real as well as the so-called ones who imagine themselves, to be such, often waste their time in wrangling over matters which have no concern with Sadhana but which can beguile them into the belief that they are utilising their time most beneficially. It does not mean that there can be anyone who is perfectly free from all faults, for everyone has some defects which can be so serious as to be impossible of eradicating in one life. For, the defects may be ingrained in one's own nature and they die only when the person concerned dies. But the presence of such a defect should not discourage one in acting rightly, for to wait until the time when one would be totally free from all defects in order to commence Sadhana would be like waiting for the cessation of the waves in the ocean in order to take a bath

in it. Life is a perpetual struggle, an unending suffering, a series of vexations, agonies and anxieties, in which one thing follows even before the other has not subsided. Under these circumstances, we are likely to be satisfied with the observation that everyone has defects, and we are none the worse. Many times we go one step above and feel elated and superior just because there is someone inferior to us. The very presence of the small makes us look big. And we feel contented in looking at the picture of the world which is painted dark all over by our minds which do not want to see good in anything. These are the nets in which the minds of Sadhakas can be caught, and mostly they are actually caught, so that they pass away from this world in the same condition in which they are born, in spite of the efforts which they initially put forth when a spark of Sattva splashed forth within them, for it can be extinguished easily by the storms that blow in the world.

The spirit of Sadhana in the Inner Path is more important than the outward form with which most people usually busy themselves. One spends the whole day in counting beads, and thinks that his Sadhana is over with that. Another attends the temple, rings the bell and does some exercises, reads a few books, so that the hours of the day are all filled up, which is all enough to make him think that he is busy with his Sadhana. Now, all this is the outward form which Sadhana may take, and a very necessary form, and it is quite all right as far as it goes. It loses its meaning only when it is deprived of the spirit and the purpose with which it is expected to be done. It is to be remembered that Sadhana is not any kind of bodily action that is outwardly demonstrated in the world, but a state of mind, a condition of thinking, a consciousness in which one lives. Suppose one counts ten thousand beads on a particular day, with a heart filled with rancour and an emotion in a state of a ebullition caused by frustration, prejudice or jealousy, the beads are not going to do one any good. All actions are symbols of an inward mood of mind, and when the mood is absent, the action by itself has no significance. The majority of Sadhakas are lost in the wilderness

of erratic thoughts and confused idealogies. This is the precise reason why, very often, there is no success in Sadhana, despite years of routines that are being followed, perhaps with great enthusiasm but bereft of the spirit needed.

It is difficult to make one understand that the spirit of Sadhana is determined by the extent of which one aspires for God realisation. This is such a difficult thing to grasp that no amount of explanation, ordinarily, has any effect on the minds of Sadhakas. We have heard the words 'God' and 'Realisation' so many times that they are likely to lose their meaning due to their being glibly used every now and then in life. But gold does not become cheap just because we utter its name a thousand times a day. Its value is intrinsic. Unless our routine of Sadhana is charged with the ideal of God-realisation, it will turn out to be useless in the end and mean nothing in substance. Maya works in various ways. In one it acts as a preventive against the very taking of the right step. It acts as a tremendous obstacle even at the commencement of the proposed effort. This happens when there is opposition from one's relatives, from the state of one's bodily health, or from want of creature comforts that are the minimum which one would need even to live on earth. But Maya can also oppose the Sadhaka by making him take the wrong step and imagine that he is moving in the right direction. The latter predicament is worse than the former. For, there, one cannot even know that one is being befooled. Most people cannot avoid falling into this pit, which Maya has dug for everyone. But the worst form which it can take is when people mistake an ethical dogma or a traditional routine of the socialised religion for the spiritual meaning of one's approach to the Absolute.

The idea of God-realisation which is mentioned as the background of the spirit of Sadhana is, it is to be reiterated, incapable of being maintained throughout one's life with equanimity. Even great saints are said to have lost their patience and balance some time or the other in their lives, in their attempts to maintain this spirit perpetually. There is no one who has been entirely free from

the clutches of error, which grips one in the form of greed, anger, lust, jealously, bewilderment, melancholy, lethargy, a subtle desire for name fame and power, which lurks like a creeping snake inside an ant-hill, and, above all the worst of things,—a feeling that one has achieved the desired end, and the only thing that remains now is to share one's realisation with others. Students who have honestly taken to the spiritual path in the beginning have been often misled into the ruts of a desire for such things as Tantrik siddhis through Mantras and rituals on the one side and a longing to pursue grammer and literature, or astronomy and palmistry on the other side. It is not that there is any thing intrinsically wrong with these sadhakas, for their trouble is that they have not found a suitable Guru to guide them in these confused conditions when they feel lost in a sea of hopelessness.

Now, let us come to the ideal of God-realisation again,—that mysterious something which is extremely difficult for the mind to comprehend because it has no temptations to offer to the anxious mind of the seeker. Ordinarily, Sadhakas are not attracted by anything that is really signified by the term 'God-realisation'. To many it is just a nebulous phrase conveying not much practical sense, and to others it is a reality of doubtful value, since it is not clear to them as to what it is really going to bring to them. Unfortunately, that God-realisation is not going to offer us anything we want in the world is the feeling of many a seeker, because, as pre-conditions of this realisation we are asked to renounce desires and want God alone. Now, how can one want God alone and nothing else that is of glory and beauty and splendour and joy in the world ? What do we gain by reaching God and losing everything else which we would like to enjoy ? Though theoritically, by the argument of the intellect, we may conclude that God is the sole objective to be aspired for, the heart with its feelings that are accustomed to see and hear of the pleasures of this creation can not reconcile itself with the arid logic that sees no good in the tasty dishes which this splendid universe with its glorious heavens is ready to offer it. These are facts which every one has to confront on the way to God-realisation, and it is

not easy to get over the temptations as long as the heart is not united with the understanding. In most cases the head and the heart are like a quarelling couple who make a hell of the family. There connot be peace unless the two have common aims and cooperate with each other in the fulfillment of a higher ideal.

The students of both the path of devotion and the path of knowledge should remember one very important point for it is this point which decides whether their Sadhana is successful or not. To the Bhakta or devotee, God is everything, and he sees God in this manifestation as the world. This does not mean that the devotee should have reached, in the very beginning itself, the state of Para-Bhakti or the devotion which sees the whole world as God shining in various forms. Even in the initial stages of Bhakti, when such a vision of God is very far, when one is busy with the worship of an image in the temple or in one's own house, or when one is engaged in Purascharana of a sacred Mantra or in Svadhyaya or sacred study, the important prerequisite is exclusive devotion to one's Sadhana, whatever be the form of the Sadhana, even if it be in a primitive form, where one is concerned only with one's Sadhana and not with the affairs of the world outside. This exclusiveness of devotion saves one from falling into mental states of lust, anger greed, jealousy, ambition, etc., for the Sadhaka has no time to think such things. This is so even when the Sadhana is in its beginning stages. What, then, should be the fortune of him who, in his rarefied devotion, sees God everywhere, in the high and low alike ?

To the student of knowledge, objects, as such, do not exist, for, to him, all objects or things are transformed into the status of a Universal Seer or a Totality of Subjectness, where the 'worldness' of the world vanishes, thus leaving no scope for him to get caught in the passions and ambitions which flood what we called the world. There is only a 'Seer' who is everywhere and nothing that is 'seen', for the 'seen' is also the 'seer' himself appearing, as the dream objects are nothing but the thinking of the mind which is unified into

a single whole in waking. Where, then, is a chance for prejudice, anger, craving and egotistic expressions ?

This is the spirit of Sadhana, whether in devotion (Bhakti) or knowledge (Jnana) which is to animate the daily routine of the Sadhaka. It is this that gives meaning to Sadhana. It is this, again, that decides one's success or failure in spiritval practice,— to what extent and in what proportion the God-element in Sadhana preponderates over other aims and objectives.



THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love !
Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art Satchidananda.
(Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.)
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal Vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind .
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—SWAMI SIVANANDA